

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE

Volume 35 Issue 1 Fall 2014



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- AN OLD AND NEW VISION
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- LIVING LIFE WITH POPE FRANCIS
- A WITNESS TO HOPE



## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Human Development Magazine is a quarterly publication for people involved in the work of fostering the growth of others. This includes persons involved in religious leadership and formation, spiritual direction, pastoral care and education interested in the development of the whole person.

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### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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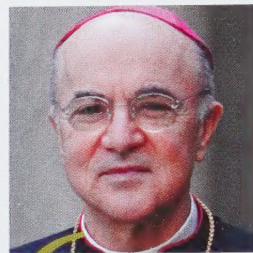
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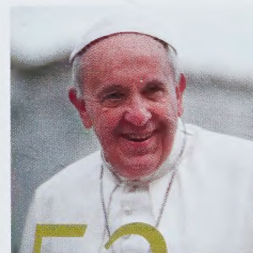
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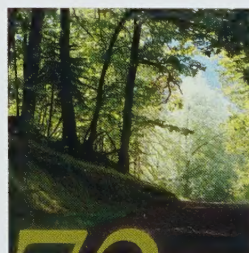
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# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Fall, 2014

Dear Friends:

God's Abundant Blessings!

With this new Phoenix edition, you are part of the rebirth of *Human Development*! Rising from the ashes, we are delighted to offer you this edition. Since 1980, under the leadership of Fr. James J. Gill, S.J., M.D., *Human Development* has provided the Church, her diocesan and religious leaders, formators, spiritual directors, vocation directors and personnel an invaluable and clearly revered resource. Upon Father Gill's death, Regis University hosted it under the leadership of Father Michael J. Sheeran, SJ. with Fr. William Barry, SJ and Robert Hamma as the most recent editors.

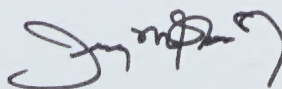
It was Denise Bertin-Epp at Guest House who brought *Human Development* to this moment in its history. We believe that we have found a secure and permanent home. We have assembled a new team, internationally recognized Editorial Board members, and over 120 writers have already volunteered to be in our new Responders Consortium. Their task is to make these articles more practical to you as you minister in the vineyard. It has taken dozens of dedicated women and men from across the globe for this to be re-launched so soon. We cannot thank them enough! All of this has proven that hope springs eternal.

First, in this edition, you will see a classic article from Fr. Gill on the "Development of the Human Person." After this article, three major Church leaders and a nationally recognized psychologist respond as to why they think the insights in 1981 still echo through the decades and also what has changed in almost 35 years. We believe that this dialogue among and between religious leaders and those who serve the Church will be the hallmark feature of the *New Human Development*. We hope and pray that this model becomes our shared reality.

Second, we are delighted to share an interview with the authors of a new and ground-breaking book: *New Generations of Catholic Sisters* published by Oxford University Press this past April. Two leading figures in the initial and ongoing formation of women and men respond to this interview and this vitally important data and analysis found within it. Third, Fr. Lou Cameli shares a talk he gave to the priests in Chicago about Pope Francis. We believe that his reflections apply not just to diocesan priests but to all who yearn to live the "Joy of the Gospel."

A regular feature of this and subsequent issues will be updates from the USCCB, LCWR, CMSM and data from Fr. Gaunt, S.J. of CARA (Center from Applies Research in the Apostolate). Presumably, these updates will engender a sense of hope. Finally, we think an amazing story and "witness to hope" will captivate you. We ask you to pay particular attention to the systemic and organizational response given after this article. Our fervent prayer is that you touch, see and know again the reality of hope.

Peace and prayers,



Fr. Gerard J. McGlone, SJ, PhD  
Executive Editor



Len Sperry, MD, PhD, D.Min.  
Executive Co-Editor



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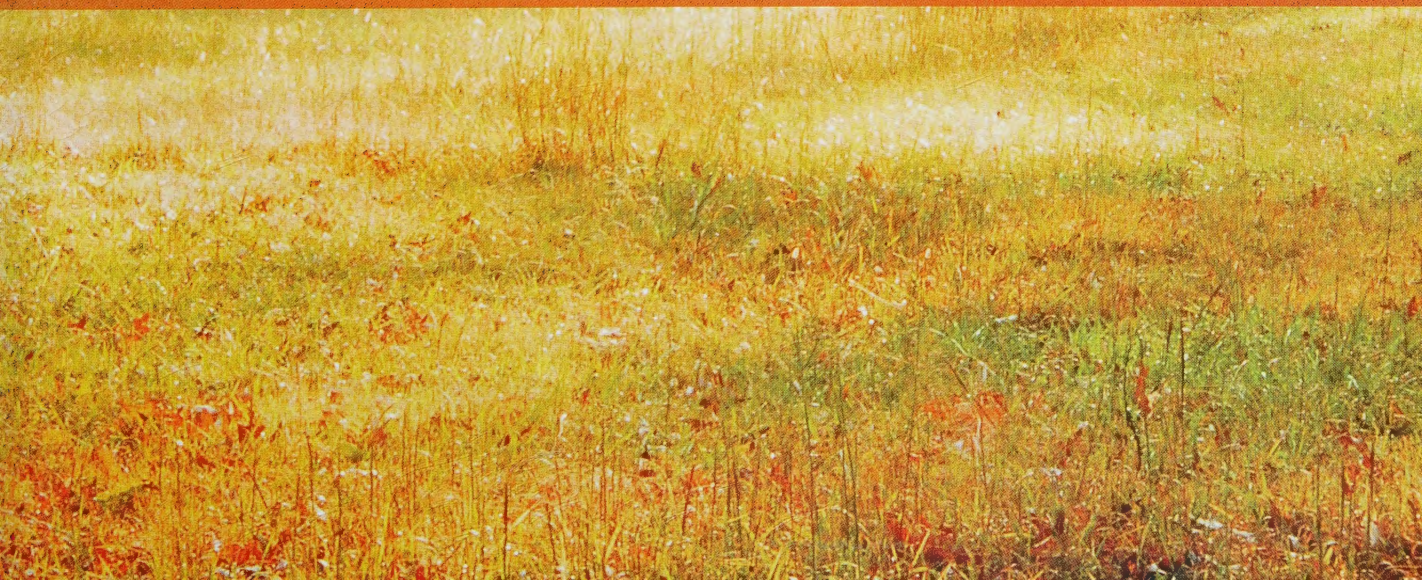






*For in this hope we were saved.  
Now hope that is seen is not hope.  
For who hopes for what he sees?  
But if we hope for what we do not see,  
we wait for it with patience.*

*-St. Paul's Letter to the Romans*





# EDITORIAL LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Gerard J. McGlone, S.J., Ph.D.**

Executive Editor

Father McGlone, S.J., Ph.D. is a Jesuit priest of the Maryland Province of Jesuits ordained in 1987. He is also Executive Director of the Guest House Institute. He has a doctoral degree in clinical psychology and an extensive background as a clinical psychotherapist for over 26 years. He has written numerous peer reviewed articles, chapters and sexual abuse prevention manuals in the field of psychology and recently won a Catholic Press Award for his book, *The Inner Life of Priests*.



**Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D., D. Min.**

Executive Co-Editor

Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D., D. Min. is a professor at Florida Atlantic University and the Medical College of Wisconsin. Board certified in Psychiatry, Preventive Medicine, and Clinical Psychology, he is a fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, American College of Preventive Medicine, and American Psychological Association. He is co-editor of the APA journal *Spirituality in Clinical Practice* and has published 80 books including *The Inner Life of Priests*; *Sex, Priestly Ministry and the Church*; and *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*.



**Fernando A. Ortiz, Ph.D., ABPP**

Associate Editor

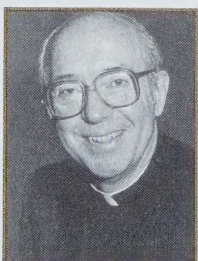
Dr. Fernando A. Ortiz, Ph.D. ABPP is a licensed and board certified psychologist. He is currently the Director of the Counseling Center at Gonzaga University. He obtained a doctoral degree in counseling psychology and provides consultation and expertise to dioceses and religious communities on intercultural competencies, self-care, healthy sexuality, and resilience. He is a member of the USCCB National Review Board.



**Kim Macphee, M.Ed.**

Graphics and Layout Editor

Kim taught graphic design, web design and studio art to high schoolers for 10 years. She has been a graphic and web designer for over 20 years, developing product and marketing for brands such as Target, Nickelodeon and Scholastic. She manages both the Human Development Magazine print and digital design along with the design of [hdmag.org](http://hdmag.org). Kim is also the marketing and design manager for Guest House, Inc. and NCCA.



**James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.**

Founding Editor

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D. was a Jesuit priest, physician and psychiatrist. He founded this journal in 1980 to assist anyone in Church leadership. Fr. Gill entered into eternal life in 2003.



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# GUEST AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE



Mary Johnson, S.N.D. de N.



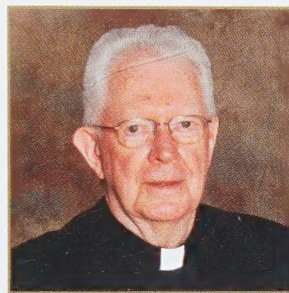
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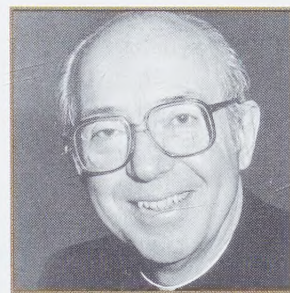
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Charles Kohlerman, C.S.C.



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

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Please see inside of back cover for Author submission details. See more at [HDMag.org](http://HDMag.org)

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# CONGRATULATORY LETTERS



ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS OF DETROIT

ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT  
44045 FIVE MILE ROAD  
PLYMOUTH, MICHIGAN 48170

September 29, 2014

Dear friends of Human Development Magazine:

I am delighted to offer words of support, encouragement and gratitude for the re-launching of this unique and valuable magazine which brings together research and lived experience from medicine, psychology and spirituality for clergy, religious and laity alike.

As a regular subscriber and reader over the past three decades, it was with sorrow that I learned of its closing last year - and now, the happy news that Guest House benefactors will be providing a new life-line for the magazine.

I congratulate all involved in this great undertaking and thank you ahead of time for all the positive impact it will bring to countless readers.

May the Lord's love and mercy shine upon you and through you.

With all best wishes, I am

Sincerely in the Lord,

*+ Adam Cardinal Maida*

Adam Cardinal Maida  
Archbishop Emeritus of Detroit







APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

3339 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008-3610

No. 8880

September 29, 2014

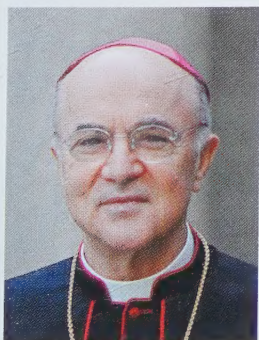
Reverend Gerard J. McGlone, SJ, PhD  
Executive Director, **Guest House Institute**  
Executive Editor, **Human Development Magazine**  
1601 Joslyn Road  
Lake Orion, MI 48360

Dear Father McGlone,

I recently learned with pleasure about the relaunching of **Human Development Magazine** as a publication of **Guest House** and gladly take this opportunity to extend to you, to Len Sperry, MD, PhD, Executive Co-Editor, and to all your collaborators my heartfelt congratulations and prayerful best wishes for its success.

May this praiseworthy initiative, as it continues to reach out to an ever wider audience, be an effective tool of the New Evangelization, providing “**an encounter between faith, reason and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility, a creative apologetics which would encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all.**” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 132)

Assuring you of my support and encouragement, I remain, with warm regards,



Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Carlo Maria Viganò*

Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò  
Apostolic Nuncio



# CONGRATULATORY LETTERS



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT  
1234 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226

29 September 2014

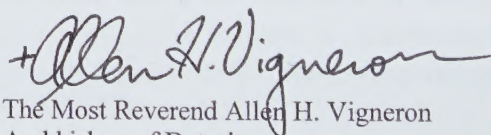
Dear Friends of *Human Development* Magazine,

I am happy to learn of the upcoming “reboot” of *Human Development* magazine. Under new leadership, I am confident that it will soon be a premier publication for the latest research in the integration of medicine, psychology, and spirituality.

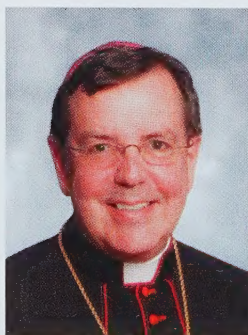
The new publisher of *Human Development*, Guest House, Inc. has its root in the Archdiocese of Detroit when Austin Ripley opened his facility in Lake Orion in 1956. I have seen the good work that Guest House has done for priests and religious who struggle with addiction. Therefore, it is with great anticipation that I look forward to the good work they can do through this magazine.

I wish all the best to all who participate in this new endeavor. May God bless the editor, writers, and readers of *Human Development* and may it bring prevention and healing to many lives through its work. Entrusting this work to the archangel Raphael, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,



The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron  
Archbishop of Detroit







LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS  
8808 CAMERON STREET – SILVER SPRING, MD 20901

September 29, 2014

Gerard J. McGlone, SJ, PhD  
Len Sperry, MD, PhD  
Editors, *Human Development Magazine*  
1601 Joslyn Road  
Lake Orion, Michigan

Dear Fr. McGlone and Dr. Sperry,

On behalf of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, I thank you for your work to launch the new version of *Human Development Magazine*.

Since its beginnings in 1980, this publication has been an outstanding resource for those serving in church ministry. Catholic women religious working in a variety of professional fields have benefitted immensely from the rich exchange of information, insights, and inspiration contained within each issue. Today, as religious leaders and formators are increasingly aware of the societal challenges to healthy human and Christian development, a new quality resource will be welcomed.

We thank you for your ingenuity in re-creating *Human Development* in its new format and look forward to many more years of reading what we know will be an outstanding publication.

Many blessings upon you, the staff, and the writers as you undertake this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

*Sharon L. Holland, IHM*

Sister Sharon Holland, IHM  
President  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious





# CONGRATULATORY LETTERS

Conference of Major Superiors of Men

September 29, 2014

Rev. Gerard J. McGlone, S.J., PhD  
Len Sperry, MD, PhD  
Editors  
Human Development Magazine  
1601 Joslyn Road  
Lake Orion, Michigan 48360

Dear Fr. McGlone and Dr. Sperry,

On behalf of the Conference of the Major Superiors of Men, I congratulate you and your colleagues for relaunching Human Development as the premier magazine to disseminate the latest findings, emerging trends, and insightful observations on the dynamics of the human personality that drive the engine of ministry in our Church.

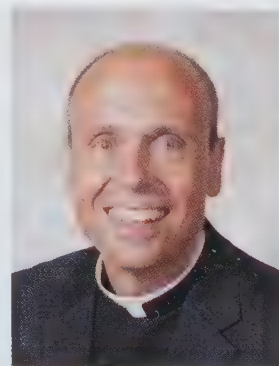
Perhaps as important as our heartfelt congratulations is our deep gratitude for your wisdom and energy in returning this remarkable resource to help Church leaders in their work of forming new ministers and assisting in the ongoing formation of those presently laboring in the field 'Of advancing the Gospel mission entrusted to us.

I am confident that your editorial leadership will magnify the success of the late Fr. James J. Gill, SJ, whose visionary spirit served countless women and men in ministry. Be assured of the prayers and best wishes of the religious brothers and priests in the United States.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*James J. Greenfield, OSFS*

Very Reverend James J. Greenfield, OSFS  
CMSM President





# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE

September 29, 2014

Dear Father Jerry,

What delight I experienced speaking with you by phone to learn that you and Dr. Len Sperry intend to continue publishing Human Development. When we began Human Development in 1980, Jim Gill, S.J., M.D. said in his editorial to the first bound issue, that he saw the need to introduce the expanding wealth of practical material within the realm of psychology, medicine, and psychiatry to religious persons who were in a position to apply it in their own lives as well as to the lives of the many in their care.

Jim's intention in beginning Human Development was to direct it to three groups of persons most likely to benefit from the type of material Human Development would present. These included persons responsible for providing religious leadership (superiors), persons entrusted with the task of spiritual, moral, and personality formation (formation directors) and persons functioning as spiritual directors.

His desire was to help these three groups to become as fully mature as possible thus enabling those in their care to live healthier, happier and more effective and productive lives.

I will pray that what was begun by Jim will continue through your and Len's efforts through this unique ministry.

Blessings and prayers,

Linda Amadeo

## EDITORS' NOTE:

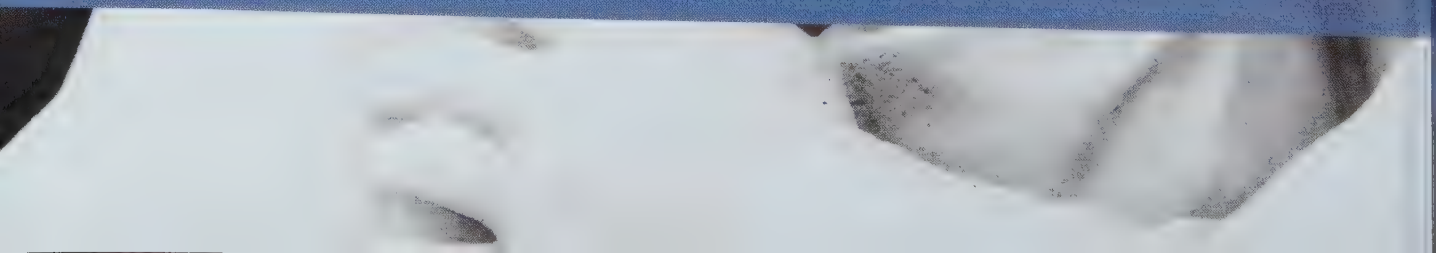
*Linda Amadeo, R.N., M.S. was the founding Associate Editor of Human Development from its beginning until she retired in 2009. For some 30 years, she guided and maintained the magazine's vision and mission even after its founding editor, James J. Gill, M.D., S.J. had passed away. We very much appreciate Ms. Amadeo's historical note as well as her heartfelt encouragement and support.*



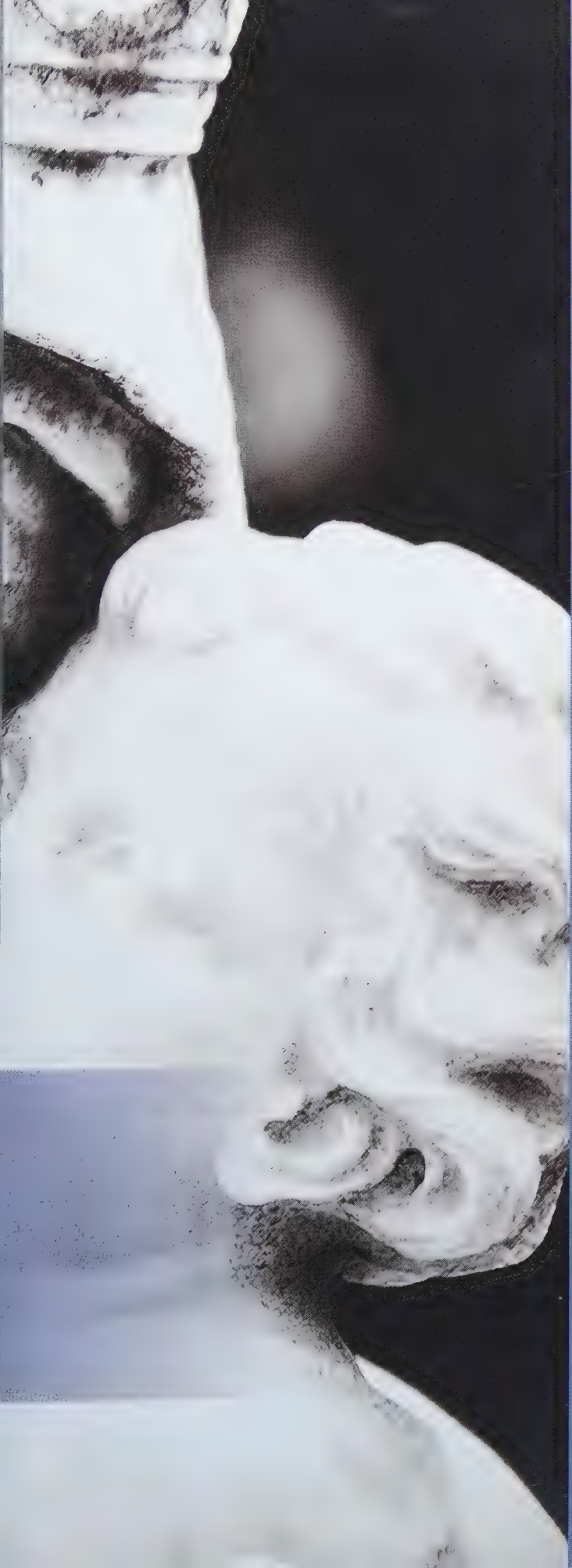


# THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONS

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.







*Editors' Note: In the first issue of the second year of Human Development's publication (1981), the following article appeared. Written by its founding editor, Fr. James Gill, S.J., M.D., the article addressed the same challenge that formation personnel face today: how to increase affective (emotional & psychological) maturity of seminarians and members of religious communities. Today, affective maturity is considered a key component of the "human pillar" of priestly formation. Increasing such maturity continues to be a challenge for many in formation and leadership in the Church.*

*In the spirit of dialogue upon which Human Development was founded, we invite you to read Father Gill's slightly edited article, written more than 30 years ago, and reflect on its relevance for today. We then invite you to share your insights, experiences, problems and solutions in a letter to the editor and articles or commentaries to this magazine, or in talking to your colleagues. To begin this dialogue we have asked for some commentaries from various Church leaders and a psychological consultant. We look forward to the dialogue that this classic article will engender, and hope you do too.*

---

**S**o far in this year-old publishing venture, if we measure in terms of subscriptions, we have been successful to a degree that has surpassed our most sanguine hopes. At the time our first issue appeared, after very little advance publicity, we had 3,000 subscribers. The second issue went out to 4,000 addresses and the third to 5,000. This issue will be received by more than 7,000, not counting those who will read it in an edition soon to be published in Spanish. Nevertheless, in a way we have hardly begun to achieve what we had in mind when inaugurating the journal.



What we envisioned was more than a widely read series of articles written especially for people who are functioning as contributors to the personality and character development of others. We have also tried to create a vehicle of exchange in which our readers, through the pages of *Human Development*, may share with one another specific things that are being done within their various settings to foster the maturation of seminarians and members of religious communities, the reasons for and the result of these efforts, what modifications have been made, and what has been learned from experience. In our editorials we have invited our readers to participate in this type of dialogue, but so far there has been little in our pages that present a picture of the "experiments" being tried and conducted by formation personnel and religious superiors out there where the action is.

It might be timely, in view of the difficulty we are experiencing in bringing our readers into a dialogue with *Human Development*, to face one of the major problems confronting people who are responsible for helping others to reach spiritual, moral, and personal maturity in a religious environment. It is the difficult question of determining who makes the attempt to help whom, at what moment, and in what specific way? To illuminate the growth-fostering process, countless suggestions have been offered during recent years from widely divergent sources (for example, Esalen, est, Jung), many of them conflicting. Principally, however, it has been the theories and forms of therapy proposed by contemporary psychologists and psychiatrists that have occasioned many if not most of the relatively recent changes that have occurred in religious formation programs. In the past quarter of a century, those who have closely observed the steadily evolving formation scene have noted one new theory after another attract the interest and influence the decisions of personnel working in religious development. All too often each new theory or technique served as a signal to abandon whatever had been learned from earlier authoritative sources.

## PSYCHOANALYTIC AND ROGERIAN INSIGHTS

First it was Freud. But despite the fact that the father of psychoanalysis had taught practically everyone in the Western world that human beings have an unconscious mind, a superego, Oedipal tendencies, drives that can be separated into sexual and aggressive types, and unconscious conflicts, it was not clear even in the 1950s that the impact of his message was being widely reflected in the way young religious and seminarians were being trained. Indeed, few formation personnel (mistresses of novices, tertian instructors, etc.) were adept at understanding and dealing with what was happening in the unconscious mental depths of those in their care, although some were able to recognize accurately a person's indeliberate use of such defense mechanisms as rationalization, denial, and regression. During those years, Freud's doctrine was still highly suspect among religious persons; he was well known as an atheist, found no place for the supernatural in his understanding of human functioning, denied that the will is ever free, and considered people's belief in God to be nothing more than evidence of their use of the mental mechanism of projection.

But along came psychologist Carl Rogers who had at one time decided upon a career within the ministry of his fundamentalist Christian church. In his client-centered therapy, he presented a method that could readily be used by formation personnel to help others solve their problems. Rogers believes that although the experiences people have had in the past can influence the way they perceive the present, their attention in both problem-solving and living should be focused principally upon what is happening in the here and now. In his theory of personality he posits just one fundamental need: to actualize, maintain, and enhance all aspects of the individual. For Rogers, the goal of life is growth, an increasing complexity of functioning that enables persons to become all they are capable of becoming. He has called the process of becoming oneself "self-actualization," and sees this consisting in developing one's unique



psychological potential and characteristics.

People in helping roles learned from Rogers to appreciate that a healthy personality is a process not a state of being – “a direction, not a destination.” Self-actualization is never a finished or static condition. It is a difficult and sometimes painful process, one that involves a continuous testing, stretching, and prodding of a person's capabilities. The lives of self-actualized persons are full of meaning, challenge, and enrichment, and they are truly themselves. They do not live merely according to the prescriptions and expectations of others. Rogers sees the fully functioning person as capable of experiencing a wide range of positive and negative emotions (e.g., joy and sadness), as living fully and flexibly in every moment of existence, and with spontaneity and freedom in action that feel right rather than in those that are dictated by reason alone. From Rogers religious helpers also learned to stop advising people about what actions they should take to solve their problems and instead began to help them make decisions by analyzing all the various aspects of themselves – those that can be brought to consciousness as well as those already there, and those that are emotional along with those that are cognitive. Personal help, by Rogerian standards, is best provided by an empathetic listener, one who reports and reflects the thoughts and feelings of the persons being assisted. The depth to which self-exploration can proceed is dependent on the level of mutual trust that prevails in the helping relationship. Most people who adopted Rogers' principles were convinced that a great deal of good could result from them and that

IMPORTANT  
FORMATION  
QUESTION –  
Who makes the  
attempt to help  
whom, at what  
moment, and in  
what specific way?







the technique – even in the hands of the less experienced – was unlikely to prove harmful in any way.

#### ABRAHAM MASLOW AND ROLLO MAY

Another psychologist who later became popular among formation personnel was Abraham Maslow. Like Rogers, Maslow viewed all human beings as possessing an innate tendency to become self-actualizing; but he went further by proposing a now widely known hierarchy of needs that must be met if a person's development is to be complete. This concept appealed strongly to many religious people, since – after satisfaction of basic needs related to physiology, safety, and security, feelings of belonging, love and esteem – a person, according to Maslow, is drawn by his impulses toward goodness, justice, and unity. The episodic “peak experiences,” which he described as transforming self-actualized individuals suddenly and unexpectedly into full transcending humanness, were found by Maslow to turn the persons undergoing them away from aggression and self-destructiveness and to bring them into close contact with their true self, their being, and even their God. He maintained that it is possible for self-actualized persons to achieve a sustained sense of plateau-living in which they can “live casually in heaven and be on easy terms with the eternal and infinite.” It seems hardly surprising that Maslow's psychology attracted the interest of religious persons who, through it, came to appreciate how essential the satisfaction of human needs is to the process of attaining full human growth. Like Rogers, he presented a very appealing model of human nature, as

demonstrated in the lives of self-actualized persons – creative, positive, and healthy – a model that can easily generate optimism and inspire enthusiasm among those striving to foster human development.

Rollo May became popular with many religious people involved in the enterprise of formation. As an existentialist, he too stressed the central importance of the concept of “becoming” and the process of self-development, or fulfilling one's potential. This process, according to May, unfolds as a result of the self-making deliberate choices that determine the course of self-fulfillment; through them a person creates his own nature or essence. May contributed to the widespread use of the term “transcendence,” signifying by it the capacity of the existential self to surpass its prior level of self-development. Under his influence, many spiritual directors and formation personnel learned to demonstrate convincingly that they valued and accepted the people they were helping, and urged them to commit themselves courageously to making vigorous decisions that would bring their human potential to mature fulfillment.

#### ERIKSON, JUNG, AND FRANKL

Probably more than any other behavioral scientist, Erik Erikson has profoundly influenced the way personality development is currently being fostered within religious communities in the United States. His familiar epigenetic theory presents the various stages of the life cycle as a series of phases or crises that demand for their completion a successful accomplishment of all the earlier life tasks that serve as prerequisites for



Self-actualized persons can “live casually in heaven and be on easy terms with the eternal and the infinite.”

further human growth. Thus, a mature person who is capable of being what today would be called a “person for others” (termed “generative” by Erikson) would need to have developed at earlier stages in life such qualities as having a capacity for trusting, being autonomous, taking initiative, having a sense of personal identity, and being capable of relating to others with intimacy – that is, a deep sharing of mind and heart. Ten years ago, when serious concern was expressed by the American bishops regarding the level of psychosexual and social development being achieved by diocesan and religious priests, it was Erikson’s model of the person and human development that the research team used as a standard for measurement. In more recent years his insights have become increasingly influential in shaping the thinking and practice of many spiritual directors and formation teams; the worldwide popularity of such writings as the one published by Father George Ganss, S.J., under the title “Affectivity and Sexuality” in the series studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits (March 1978), gives testimony to this fact.

Anyone familiar with the recent history of the influence of psychology on personal religious development knows that Carol Jung’s ideas have gained expanding popularity, especially in regions where there are schools of theology operated under Christian auspices. Jung insisted that the “general neurosis of our time” results from the loss of a spiritual connection with our past, and the only cure he offered consists of a renewal of contact with the unconscious forces of our personalities. Also increasingly appreciated among religious people are the writings of Viktor Frankl, whose views sound

in some ways directly antithetical to Jung’s, especially when he maintained that being fully human means relating to someone or something beyond one’s self. He saw our major motivation in life as being a search, not for self but for meaning, and this entails a “forgetting” of ourselves. For him, the only way to become self-actualizing is through fulfilling a meaning beyond the self.

#### GROUP DYNAMICS AND HUMAN POTENTIAL MOVEMENTS

Other strong influences on religious and spiritual formation have come from the group dynamics movement and the human potential movement, which in some ways overlap. There is hardly a community or seminary in which some sort of group experience has not been undertaken and aimed at developing people’s ability to listen to others more carefully and acceptingly, to understand themselves more deeply, to express their feelings more openly and spontaneously, and to help one another solve some of the problems in their lives. Even the ideas of such an offbeat human-potential guru as the late Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls have had an impact on religious organizations and institutions. His best insights are useful truths that have found widespread application all over the religious world. For example, he believed that every organism tends toward wholeness or completion, that balance within the human organism must be maintained in the interest of mental health, that self-awareness can lead to the development and growth of a healthy personality, that mature persons are able to accept their own impulses and yearnings, and that a well-



developed person focuses his attention on what is here and now rather than living in the past or anxiously dwelling on a not-yet-real future. Perls' insistence that we should not be bothered by anxiety over what may happen tomorrow sounds much like the lesson Jesus tried to teach when He used the lilies of the field as an example. Perls' emphasis on the importance of learning to use our senses to stay in touch with the real world around us, rather than indulging in a life of fantasies, fears, and prejudices, is just as valuable for a Christian person's development as his dogmatic stand that we must stay in touch with present realities that surround us no matter how painful facing up to them might be.

He also points to something of special importance for spiritual directors when he states that many individuals are unable to accept that some of their thoughts, feelings, and desires truly belong to them, and so they disown them; by thus disavowing or alienating these facets of themselves, they consequently render themselves unable to function as complete persons. Psychologist Duane Schultz, in his book *Growth Psychology: Models of the Healthy Personality*, summarizes Perls' teaching: "Supremely healthy individuals have rejected or discarded none of their potential; it is all available for use. Such persons are in touch with all aspects of their selves and find none of them offending or threatening. Healthy persons are fully themselves, fully aware, and fully in use." Such a statement makes Perls' doctrine sound as though it could be readily harmonized with the spiritual practice of trying to get in touch with one's own deep feelings and yearnings, and, rather than ignore them, to place them before

God in prayer so as to discover what to do with them according to His desires – in other words, as Perls would prescribe, to put them to use.

With practically no effort at all, we could find dozens of other psychologist-authors who have influenced religious life and formation programs through their insights into human nature; for example, Gordon Allport, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, B.F. Skinner, Eric Berne, Albert Ellis, William Glover, and Eugene Kennedy. It would be impossible to live a day in a house of religious formation without finding numerous signs of the influence all these contemporaries have had on the way we train our young candidates for a vowed life and for the priesthood in this country. But often these people are not given full credit for their contributions. In fact, the anti-Christian reputation of a number of them blocks recognition of their influence.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS CAN GET LOST

But there is a different and more serious problem confronting us. Obviously, not everything that behavioral scientists such as Rogers, Maslow, May, Frankl, Jung, Erikson, and Perls have written can be put to use by religious people who are trying to help others to grow. And in the future, new authoritative voices will be heard, at times supplementing and at times contradicting the views of such writers as these. There is a danger that the valuable contributions of these and other scientists will be too quickly set aside and lost sight of. This may sound pessimistic, but let me give an example of how faddish some religious leaders can be. Not long ago I was talking with a major





superior of a large religious congregation of men. He was complaining that the middle-aged members of the community were not finding it possible to tell him openly what they were really thinking and how they were actually feeling in response to some of the changes still taking place within their houses and institutions. He praised the younger men for being "much more honest in communicating their ideas and feelings," then asked what could be done to encourage the older men to communicate more openly and profoundly. I asked him whether there was anyone in his congregation trained to conduct group experiences in developing communication skills. "We did all that group dynamic stuff ages ago," he exclaimed with amazement. And again I realized that many religious people are fad-followers just as he is; they go for what is in vogue, then discard it when the fashion changes, much the way people do with clothes.

It is certainly true that fewer people participate in group experiences today than did 10 to 15 years ago. There are also fewer people receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation and attending Sunday Mass. However, just because fewer people are taking advantage of these opportunities, it certainly does not prove that the group experiences have lost their power to achieve desirable results. Nevertheless, practices such as keeping personal journals, attending Sadhana workshops, and meditating while jogging will just as surely drift into oblivion as have the once popular Volkswagen "bug," transatlantic passenger liners, the Sodality of Our Lady, and the Apostleship of Prayer leaflets.

My point is simply this: if some type of practice or experience has proved helpful as an instrument for religious formation – for example, one that has enabled novices, seminarians, and persons in later stages of progress to advance toward spiritual, moral, or apostolic maturity – it should not be abandoned merely because the secular world is tiring of it or finds it no longer commercially lucrative. In other words, there are some formation strategies and experiments that, having been found effective, deserve to be perpetuated. But

I would not want to see these confined strictly within the congregation or seminary that has discerned their value; instead, I would hope that whatever is found useful would be shared with other formation staffs throughout the world. We have come once again to the primary reason for Human Development's existence; we want this journal to be an instrument for exchanging precisely this sort of information.

#### TOTAL REJECTION INAPPROPRIATE

The insights of psychologists such as those mentioned above will also soon be lost unless we make special efforts to preserve them. Anyone who studied theology in a Catholic seminary 20 or more years ago will appreciate what I'm going to say. Those of us who were striving to learn the established truths in that important and venerable academic discipline were taught to state a thesis, prove it from reason, sacred Scripture, writings of the Church Fathers, and official Church documents (encyclicals, decrees), then to quickly deal with all the writers or groups down through the ages who held a position contrary to what we had just proved. We would name the "adversary," refer to a heresy-tinged line or two from his works, then pass on to the next adversary whom we would dispatch with equal abruptness. Unfortunately (I can see all too clearly now), this procedure in no way encouraged us to study seriously the wisdom and insight of those generally brilliant thinkers rather than concentrating only on the statements we regarded as theological errors. Instead of associating Zwingli, Huss, Luther, Calvin, and countless others only with what we were taught was objectionable in their offerings, we should have been encouraged to look through their eyes, see reality against the background affecting their vision, make our own the truths they recognized, and only then discard those ideas that seemed for some reason unacceptable from a Catholic perspective.

As students of theology, our attitude toward those whose positions threatened our own was the same as that of some of today's religious toward psychologists such as those we have been considering. Because they adopt certain



stands or – generally by omission – make certain errors, they are condemned totally by their righteous critics. Inevitably, to some extent there is right and wrong in those writers' presentation of what comprises and what goes on with a person. However, there is a growing trend to brand much of the recent humanistic psychology movement as if it were a heretical threat to the well-being of the Church and its ideals. Particularly alarming is the widespread response to a book that has advocated precisely this sort of generalized rejection. The book, *Psychology as Religion*, by New York University psychologist Paul Vitz, has influenced many readers to focus on the potentially misleading elements in contemporary theories rather than to discriminate between what is true and useful and what is not. Vitz maintains that the theories of the self, proposed by Rogers, Maslow, May, Fromm, and others within the realm of current psychology and the human potential movement are encouraging a "cult of self-worship" and amount to nothing less than a religion that is competing with Christianity. He is right, of course, in calling attention to the fact that, taken alone, each of these theories would fail to provide a straight track toward salvation; they do fail to take into consideration the depths and relations (for example, with God and baptized neighbors) that Christian teachings illuminate. But he does his readers an intellectual disservice by not encouraging them to look for those things that are true about human nature and human development that these writers have discovered and made known.

## HUMAN POTENTIAL NARCISSISM

Another critic of the human potential movement, and of Fritz Perls in particular, is psychiatrist Stephen Applebaum of the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas, who in 1979 wrote the very informative book *Out in Inner Space: A Psychoanalyst Explores the New Therapies*. Applebaum regards Perls' "Gestalt Prayer" as indicative of the narcissism in the movement. This prayer has found its way, in the form of a poster, onto the walls of countless college dormitories and student counseling offices. It reads: "I do my thing and you do

your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations, and you are not in this world to live up to mine. You are you and I am I. If by chance we find each other, it's beautiful. If not, it can't be helped." Applebaum finds these lines presumably intended as a statement of yogic detachment, "a welcome for those people who are tied to one another through guilt, who take on undue and unwarranted responsibility for others on the basis of neurotic fantasies rather than real need." He also sees the prayer as a potential teaching aid "in overcoming the loss of self that so many people suffer through, designed their life according to the wishes of others, rather than hammering out their own philosophy and recognizing their own wishes." Still seeking value in the prayer, Applebaum finds its message, at a more primitive level, capable of being used to bring about healthy separation, since it can be interpreted as "a statement of the recognition that one need not be dependent on another for survival."

I like Applebaum's readiness to try to find constructive, useful application of Perls' thoughts. At the same time, he is realistic; he detects the prayer's narcissistic overtones and recognizes that it can be read as "a declaration of solipsistic independence, the kind of self-preoccupation that results in heedlessness to the plight of others." It could also be heard as "a snarling declaration that the other person is not worthy of any more than a chance encounter."

In line with Applebaum's last remarks, Donald Campbell, president of the American Psychological Association, has expressed the belief that in contemporary American society a "non optimal production of underinhibited, overly narcissistic and overly selfish individuals" is occurring, with psychology deserving a large amount of blame. He stated in 1975, "There is in psychology today a general background assumption that the human impulses provided by biological evolution are right and optimal, both individually and socially, and that repressive or inhibitory moral traditions are wrong. This assumption may now be regarded as scientifically wrong. Psychology, in propagating this background perspective





in its teaching of perhaps 80 or 90 percent of college undergraduates, and increasing proportions of high school and elementary school pupils, helps to undermine the retention of what may be extremely valuable social-evolutionary inhibitory systems which we do not yet fully understand." As a psychologist himself, Campbell admits that there is "social functionality and psychological validity to the concepts of sin and temptation and of original sin due to human carnal, animal nature." Many of the young men and women entering our seminaries and novitiates these days have received the sort of psychologic education that Campbell deplors.

#### COMPLAINTS AGAINST HUMAN POTENTIAL MOVEMENT

Even though, as I mentioned earlier, it would be wise for people working in religious formation to preserve the useful ideas and techniques of humanistic psychologists and the pioneers of the human potential movement (Rogers, Maslow, May, Perls, et al) rather than reject them out of hand because of their shortcomings, it is equally important, I would think, to keep in mind the

criticisms that have been leveled at the human potential leaders by many of their professional colleagues. Applebaum has summarized their litany of complaints as follows: "(1) A feckless prizing of feelings over the intellect, which substitutes mere indulgence of sensory experience for the hard work of conceptual thought. (2) A de-emphasis of the past and future, which deprives the here-and-now of meaning, renders it superficial. (3) A romantic deification of the animal, primitive and child, as if a child could really lead us along the torturous path laid out by the exigencies of the real world. (4) The positing of the sublimely ineffable self that transcends mere social role and cannot exist independent of it. (5) 'Communicating' and 'relating' become ends rather than means, as if the acts of 'communicating' and 'relating' are in themselves valuable regardless of what is communicated and why one is relating himself to someone or something. (6) A language that gaily invites one to camaraderie while debasing the pursuit of meaning. (7) The belief that the sky is the limit for a human's potential and achievable merely through the power of positive thinking, which turns attention away from practical, pragmatic means of bringing



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about change. (8) The assertion that the way to change social ills is through changing individual consciousness rather than working directly on such social ills, which may also reflect an indifference to social problems.”

The most central criticism of human potential thinking centers around its alleged narcissism, the tendency toward exaggerated concern over the self with consequent disregard of the needs, condition, and concerns of others. Some psychologists see this type of self-preoccupation as inherited from Eastern mysticism. Anthropologist V.S. Naipaul, in his book *India: A Wounded Civilization*, calls Hinduism a “pernicious fantasy.” He believes, as Applebaum has understood him, that “its romanticized personal detachment, its glorification of selflessness, is actually a selfish preoccupation that keeps the culture from examining and knowing itself. Self-centered escape is substituted for real history and real problems. Asceticism as a personal discipline, and to encourage better meditation, is allowed to proliferate into an indifference toward deprivation everywhere and in all forms.” At present there is some evidence that Hinduism is increasingly affecting American Catholic spirituality and not just the human potential movement’s particular brand of psychology.

#### POSSIBLE FORMATION PITFALLS

For the person who wants to shape the development of others in the direction of full Christian maturity, the task of extracting what is helpful and rejecting what is harmful from psychology is not an easy one. Through the pages of *Human Development*, we hope to provide useful guidance in response to the questions and reports on experiences and experiments that our readers present to us. But there are two further perils to be kept in mind where formation efforts are being undertaken. The first is the assumption that religious people’s behavior is springing from motivation that is “mature” simply because, on the surface, their actions appear to match the popular image of Christian adulthood. The other peril is that of being too idealistic, or too abstract, in trying



to achieve the task of religious formation. Certainly a spirituality that is built solidly upon Christian principles is a prerequisite for people seriously desiring to grow, with God's help, to the fullest extent they can. The lives of Christ and the saints provide ample embodiment of these fundamentals, and the example of those who have founded the various religious congregations bear witness to the specific charism God has bestowed on them and their spiritual offspring. The obvious temptation for many who are involved in the work of formation is to point to certain qualities – for example, patience, perseverance, courage, humility, a spirit of poverty – and to simply exhort those in their care to pray and strive for such virtues.

A comparable kind of idealizing might be seen in a person's holding up a theology and encouraging others to live accordingly. This is easily done with appealing writings such as those by Father Karl Rahner. When he argues that all of life for human beings is meant to be a process of "becoming," and that this maturation consists in self-actualizing our potentialities principally through human, interpersonal love, Rahner is maintaining, as his disciples know well, that "the love of God and the love of neighbor are one and the same thing." The temptation, in suggesting to others that they learn to live by such insights, is to turn the enterprise over to them after saying something like "you'd better learn to love your neighbor and beg God to help you do so; your religious development depends on how well you learn to love."

## PRACTICAL STEPS REQUIRED

There is certainly nothing wrong with holding up the qualities of Christ, saints, and founders along with theologic principles of spiritual growth; we all need these as guideposts and inspiration for our lives. But what we also need, if we are actually to develop these same qualities in ourselves and to incorporate these principles into the core of our being, is help in learning just how to accomplish this. It is easy enough to decide to become a loving person, for example, and to desire and pray that spontaneity and generosity like that of Jesus will characterize my

own loving service of my neighbor. But who will show me how to go beyond the ideal and understand what concrete steps I have to take to overcome my lack of spontaneity and my deep seated selfishness? Who will help me to devise a series of experiences or experiments that will enable me to see such goodness in my neighbors that I will love them intensely and be ready to share with them unsparingly all that God has given me to share? Who knows how to help me concretize the ideals of Christianity so that I can develop the habits (virtues) that will make them part of my very nature and powerful expressions of my soul?

Men and women all over the world, acting as facilitators of human religious development, are in fact working continually to help others to acquire the qualities that characterize the idealized sister, brother, or priest they want to become, and are trying to help them learn to demonstrate these traits concretely and habitually in their everyday lives. In accomplishing this task they are helping those they guide to devise real-life situations into which they can enter, with a hope of developing the qualities of personality or character they seek. They are assisting some to learn patience in this way, and others courage or justice; they are aiding some to become magnanimous, others to develop trust or compassion. In most instances their problem is to remove the inner obstacles blocking the formation of these qualities. Their perennial efforts are directed toward finding creative ways of constructing what could be termed "experiments for growth," some of which turn out to be remarkably successful and others that terminate as surprising failures. These experiences are what we are asking our readers to share. Most people doing formation work have all the ideals they need; what many would welcome, I am sure, are insights into new, concrete ways of facilitating specific kinds of growth.

## CREATIVE EXPERIMENT EXEMPLIFIED

It might be helpful to give a single, simple example of the kind of creative experiment I



have been trying to describe. A priest I was attempting to help had grown up with such a need to be liked by everyone that he found himself feeling downhearted and resentful every time he detected even the slightest trace of a negative attitude toward him. His days were repeatedly spoiled by what he interpreted as signs of hostility or rejection. His efforts to please were inordinate, and inevitably at times unsuccessful. But how could he learn to accept the complaints, criticisms, and coldness that come from time to time into every person's life, especially one devoted to ministry? My obvious task was to help him find his way into some sort of situation that would enable him to realize and eventually accept the fact that nobody can please everyone, and that it is possible for a person to feel good about himself and his accomplishments even while some individuals are openly showing their dislike for what he is doing. Together we tried to imagine a situation in which he could work for others who would have a great need for his services, but one in which he would repeatedly find himself pleasing some and displeasing others. It would have to involve circumstances in which he would be able to tell himself, "I can't possibly please them all and I don't need to," since even those who would feel negatively toward him at some moments would in the same situation at later times feel very positively disposed.

We finally came up with a plan: he would offer his services for a season as an umpire in a softball league. The decisions he would have to make (e.g., calling each pitch a ball or a strike, or declaring base runners either safe or out) would be sure to please some of the players and alienate others. Since his contribution to the games would be indispensable, he would continually feel needed by all on both teams. So he took the job of umpire, learned to live, game by game, with the appreciation mixed with hostile complaints, and at the end of the season felt that he had succeeded in eradicating his dependence on everyone's approval. He had developed a habitual, calming realization that when a person is doing something he knows others need, he can take justifiable pride in his efforts and like himself, even though – every day of

the week – some people will be dissatisfied and complaining. This was the experiment, and, I'm happy to say, it worked for the man. He became far less frequently discouraged, less resentful, happier, and more loving.

## WORKSHOP FOR FORMATION PERSONNEL

This article has described a number of psychological approaches that may be useful in shaping the personal development of seminarians and young religious in our country as well as abroad. Not all that the "new psychology" has brought forward is to be adopted without question, but many of the insights and techniques of contemporary authorities are proving useful to formation personnel, whose task is to be idealistic and inspirational but also practical and innovative in helping those in their care to find concrete ways, through experiences and experiments to develop the virtues they seek. Perhaps training should be designed for formation personnel that will provide an opportunity for them to improve their skill in devising experiments to develop the qualities the young men and women in their care will undoubtedly need.

I want to close by repeating our invitation to all our readers to help us make Human Development more useful by contributing their own insights, experiences, experiments, problems, and solutions so that thousands can compare their own efforts and come away enriched. We will continue to feature diverse types of articles, of course, just as we have done in past issues. But we want and need your letters, articles, memos, book reviews, and any other form of communication. The usefulness of this venture – potentially affecting the lives of millions – depends principally on you. Our privilege is to be the link that will connect you, our readers, with one another.



# Recommended Readings

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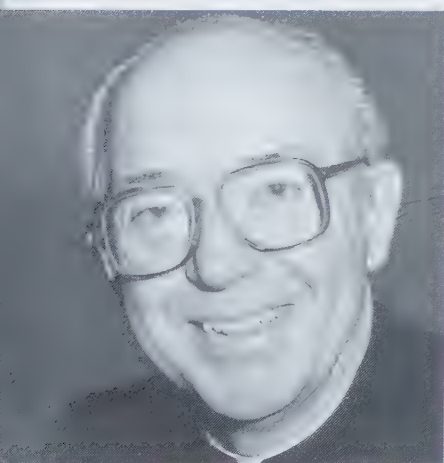
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

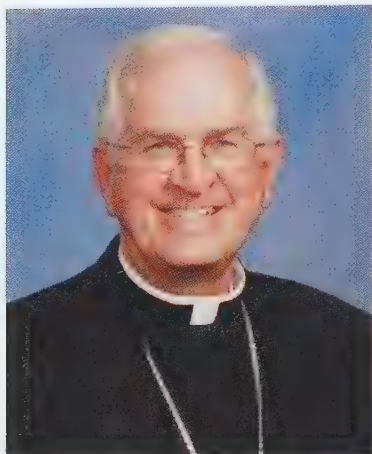


James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D. was a Jesuit priest, physician and psychiatrist. He founded this journal in 1980 to assist anyone in Church leadership. Fr. Gill entered into eternal life in 2003.



# IN MY OPINION



I believe it was C. S. Lewis who defined humility as not so much thinking less of ourselves but rather as thinking of ourselves less. It was a pleasant surprise to read an article written thirty years ago by Fr. James Gill

that described the inherent danger in modern psychological theories of self-development that can turn students in on themselves. Of course, modern psychology has contributed much to healthy living and healthy ministry as it is necessary to develop a healthy lifestyle in preparation for a life of selfless ministry. An unbalanced attention to self-care, however, can unwittingly turn a person inward down a path of progressively thinking of self more and more, creating an ironically unhealthy spiral.

With its great appreciation for the beauty of creation, albeit in need of redemption by Christ, Catholic theology leads us to embrace what is good from the social sciences. Fr. Gill's survey of practitioners points to many who have made positive contributions. I am reminded of the eminently appropriate insights of Victor Frankl in logotherapy – seeing the search for meaning outside of oneself as a pinnacle of maturity – and Erik Erickson's "Man for Others" as a way of embracing the self-emptying (kenosis) of Jesus Christ, who empowers us to follow Him in this path of selfless love.

Ironically, such discoveries are a return to the original kerygma of the Lord Jesus. In Philippians, St. Paul uses the Greek, kenosis,

to denote the emptying of self that was the Incarnation. St. John the Baptist summed it up well in "I must decrease, and He must increase."

The 1981 essay by Fr. Jim Gill captures how a proper use of social sciences and modern psychological theory can aid the mature servant of Christ to "go out," as Pope Francis calls us to do, and through Christ, to accompany and to see clearly and lovingly the person being served in Christ's name. Both eyes ought to be pointed outward. I especially liked the advice he provided to an inward-leaning client who was crushed over every criticism: Fr. Gill suggested volunteer service as an umpire. While the umpire has the advantage of developing a certain toughness when his call is not supported, he has the vision of a game well-called and what is more, he is looking outward with his eyes focused on insuring that a fair game is being played.

Thus, the newly ordained (and we who wish to retain that newly ordained zeal) will do well to focus on being "fit for ministry." At ordination, the Vocation Director, charged with overseeing seminarian formation, stands up and proclaims to the ordaining bishop: "He has been found worthy." This judgment, borne of careful and loving scrutiny, humbly announces that this man is ready to go forth and serve. He is fit for ministry. Of course, there is a blend of support needed for a fruitful ministry – a good mentor, an exemplary pastor, and solid support groups. In the end, however, ordination sends the new priest forth to serve, and a certain toughness is required. Jesus reminds us repeatedly in the Gospel that His followers will need to take up the cross.

Those being ordained are products of the culture in which they live, and today's culture is rightly described as inward-looking. Pope Francis calls the Church to resist this unhealthy inward look by "going out," and Fr. Gill's article serves us



well in providing the positive balance needed today. Our newly ordained priests, generous and talented, need help to find the balance of healthy self-care that allows them to keep their focus on Christ and on the people He calls them to serve.

A decade after this article, St. John Paul II gave the Church the wonderful apostolic exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, from which flowed the Program for Priestly Formation which, when well used, moves the candidate for priestly service outward. All of this is great momentum for us to embrace C.S. Lewis' brand of humility: not too much thinking less of ourselves but rather thinking of ourselves less.

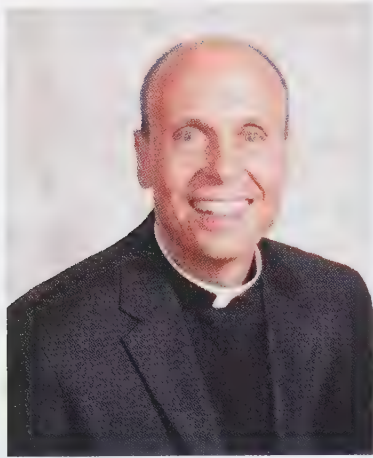
**Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz**

*After being ordained a priest in 1972, Archbishop Joseph Edward Kurtz served for 27 years in various roles within the Diocese of Allentown, including as a social worker, Catholic Charities director, pastor, and teacher on the high school, college, and seminary levels. In 1999 Archbishop Kurtz was appointed Bishop of Knoxville, Tennessee, in 2007, Archbishop of Louisville, Kentucky, and in 2013, he was elected President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.*

“I especially liked the advice he provided to an inward-leaning client who was crushed over every criticism: Fr. Gill suggested volunteer service as an umpire. While the umpire has the advantage of developing a certain toughness when his call is not supported, he has the vision of a game well-called and what is more, he is looking outward with his eyes focused on insuring that a fair game is being played.”



# IN MY OPINION



As I read Fr. Jim Gill's summative article, *The Development of Persons*, published in 1981, what first came to mind in terms of the changes in the formation landscape in the intervening

years was Pope Francis. Writing "for the person who wants to shape the development of others in the direction of full Christian maturity" (pg. 9), Fr. Gill seems to foreshadow the sharp clarity of the Pontiff's words when he met with the Union of Superiors General last November. At that meeting, the Pope warned that priests can become "little monsters" if they are not trained properly as seminarians, saying their time studying must be used to mold their hearts as well as their minds. Although Pope Francis was in an open discussion with the religious superiors in Rome, he actually gave to us in leadership who are ultimately entrusted with the ministry of formation, a pithy and quite accurate definition of an affective maturity that requires the integration of head and heart in the service of others.

Pope Francis' brief reflection on formation could stand as a symbolic moment for the work of human development that Fr. Gill worked to fortify. In the 33 years after this Jesuit psychiatrist wrote *The Development of Persons*, a Jesuit Pope addressed superiors general on the formation of priests during an unprecedented crisis when the worldwide church suffered from the evil consequences of the underdevelopment of persons ordained to serve as priests. The scourge of the child sexual abuse by clergy continues to harm people, yet the very purpose

of sound formation is to ensure that only healthy ministers are placed in such sacred service for the church.

While the spirit and call of Fr. Gill's work and wisdom presciently anticipated Pastores Dabo Vobis, the seminal apostolic exhortation of St. John Paul II on the formation of priests that has clear connections to the formation of religious women and men as well, the late Pope's delineation of the four pillars of formation—human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral—raises the personality development of the ministry candidate and efforts to strengthen it as chief priorities for the ministry of formation. Emphasizing the health of the minister, what is commonly referred to as affective maturity, the Pope echoes Fr. Gill's insights and impulses: To have healthy, balanced ministers, sound human sciences must be employed.

Pope Francis' words, then, recall chasms that may have occurred in the formation of ministers whose behaviors have caused harm: Those whose sexuality was not integrated into their personality or never healthily developed; rigid ministers unable to flex a pastoral muscle; ministers consumed with a clericalism that excluded, offended, and damaged souls; or insensitive preachers that misplaced an intellectualism when a pastoral response was needed.

Pope Francis' insistence on the formation of minds and hearts is hardly novel, but it is presently urgent. It was no less urgent when Fr. Gill wrote this article. Both of these Jesuits emerge from an anthropology that views the human person as loved and redeemed, yet flawed and in need of God's grace. Fr. Gill's appreciation of Rogers's "healthy personality [a] s a process not a state of being—a 'direction, not a destination'" is echoed by the Pope's "I am a sinner" response to the question of the interviewer "Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?" The implicit notion of ongoing formation, a clear



value for Fr. Gill, quells any possible finished-product mentality that sees formation or seminary programs as graduations. Growing into the image of Jesus is a lifelong process that demands solid human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral reflection, engagement, and conversation. This type of conversion can only be hoped for in the fullness of the Spirit that we are promised to experience, through grace, in eternal life.

Indeed, the horrific wound of the abuse crisis is not the only marker to be considered in the time since Fr. Gill wrote this article.

Revolutions in technology, the advent of the internet, the ubiquity of spirituality and awareness of world religions, varying embraces of globalization, increases in the acceptance of sexual diversity, diminishment of personnel in religious life and the priesthood, and the just call for gender equality all intersect with the ministry of formation as never before. These exigencies, though urgent and compelling, do not change the one fundamental truth before those charged with training and forming future ministers: The ongoing development of the human person demands attention, and the church must provide it.

The contributions of Sr. Katarina Schuth, Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy, Fr. Eugene Hemrick, Dr. Dean Hoge, and many of their colleagues in the past generation of formation experts have paralleled and advanced the work of Fr. Gill, pointing to programs of formation that addressed the above matters with different levels of effectiveness and promise. The many theories, processes, and perspectives outlined in his article have served as foundations for the work countless formators completed. Nevertheless, the need to probe the elements that comprise a healthy personality continues to call forth informed,

intuitive, and insightful leadership. Yes, this is the responsibility of provincials and directors of formation; it is also incumbent on those in formation to know and believe that they, in fact, need and desire such leadership. It has been said that the first sign of an intelligent person is the ability to know what is not known. Perhaps, then, a clear indicator of a viable candidate for ministry is the willingness and openness to the experience of formation that leads to greater self-understanding in order to facilitate greater self-sacrifice on behalf of others in need.

**“The ongoing development of the human person demands attention, and the church must provide it.”**

These are the shepherds God has promised to give to the church, and these are the women and men Fr. Gill wanted to help. Thankfully, he did it by providing invaluable aids to the pastors of the future pastors so that God’s Kingdom is richly blessed by the development of all persons.

*James J. Greenfield, OSFS is an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales and the provincial of his community. He was recently installed as the president of CMSM.*



# IN MY OPINION



I resonated with the article, *The Development of Persons*, by James Gill, SJ and found it just as timely for 2014 as it was in 1981. He notes the difficulty experienced by Human Development in getting

readers to create and sustain a dialogue among themselves using the publication as the conduit; and, the danger inherent in the total rejection of emerging ideas based on a less than genuine and comprehensive litmus test. These two points brought to mind our contemporary experience of maintaining a silo approach to the process of human development and our suspect attitude towards newly emerging ideas that have the potential to influence and facilitate human development with depth and breadth for the future of the whole community of life. While these points function on the micro-level in the particular ministry of formation for religious life and priesthood, they also function on the macro-level of institutions, systems, and organizations, thus relevant for populations beyond religious life.

It's challenging to truly be open to new learnings, new ways of thinking, new patterns of relationships, new understandings of the world/universe/cosmos and new experiences of God. Jesus names this challenge when he speaks of new wine needing new wineskins. In "The Joy of the Gospel", Pope Francis identifies this challenge when he reminds us that 'with Christ joy is constantly born anew' and invites all of us to an ongoing renewed personal encounter with Jesus

Christ. Margaret Wheatley casts this challenge in the myriad cultural, political, religious, economic and social extremes and polarities we create and sustain to the detriment of ourselves, each other, and the planet. And Ilia Delio, OSF, situates this challenge in Teilhard's vision of the cosmos continuing to reveal the very mystery of God who is always doing something new.

A process for human development that is whole, holy and holistic is also complex, comprehensive and collaborative. All that goes on in the larger, global world impacts the inner world of the human being. The advances in science and technology, the obscene accumulation of wealth in the face of such widespread abject poverty, the plight of the diverse community of life on this planet, and the widespread violence, suffering and oppression of peoples by other peoples all influence the development of the human consciousness and the human capacity for meaningful relationships, compassionate worldviews, and wholeness of being.

The contemporary challenges facing the full development of human persons stem in part from the resistance to learn, again and anew, from a wide scope of influences based, perhaps, on the fear of having one's perspective changed. The new wine of insights, discoveries, revelations and ideas abound. Creating opportunities for the new wine of today's professionals who offer their skills and talents so we can reap the fruits seems appropriate and responsible. Ignoring this new wine seems less than responsible. Trying to pour this new wine into old wineskins seems futile. Insisting that it be poured into the wineskins we want to hold onto or deem immutable borders on squander.

Creating and sustaining a dialogue across boundaries of perspective, experience, and role demands a freedom of inquiry, a maturity of self, and a desire for transformation. Our



culture holds fast to the silo framework whereby the individual/group engages little meaningful interaction outside of itself. While there may be group meetings and a genuine willingness to share thoughts and experiences, the foundational ideology remains: each entity returns home to 'business as usual'. This silo mentality supports competition over collaboration, separateness over solidarity, and triumph over truth. It's hard work for silos to engage in dialogue. They claim the lack of time to engage in dialogue because there is so much work to be done within their silo. They admit that dialogue is a viable and worthy process and wish they could participate.

The fear of genuinely encountering a person or perspective unknown runs the risk of weakening or threatening longstanding thoughts and beliefs. Perhaps more importantly, the possibility of working in true partnership runs the deeper risk of transforming the original idea, perception, or process so that the outcome barely resembles the original individual/organization who articulated it. We welcome the experience of interdependence in the way we approach a buffet: looking at almost everything but only taking what we want. The fierce independence and freedom to choose affords the opportunity to bypass that which we may really want and truly need. In a like manner, we welcome intercongregational meetings, intergenerational members, intercultural communities, interfaith experiences, international efforts and inter-religious processes even as maintain our independence as congregations, generations, cultures, faith traditions, nations and religions. The energy and commitment needed to break free of silo-mentalities is costly. The fruit of genuine dialogue is priceless.

The danger inherent in the total rejection of emerging ideas based on a less than genuine comprehensive litmus test exists in our times

as it did in Fr. Jim Gill's time. His deliberate articulation of this danger identified what was happening in the field of psychology and the ministry of formation and provided a view into 2014. With the plethora of disciplines exploding with new insights, ideas, impulses, and intuitions across all sectors of the human endeavor, we find ourselves awash in emergence.

What seems to be happening in response to this new moment of emergent ideas is quick assessment, pedestrian study, and biased judgment. The less than genuine and comprehensive litmus test applies and the decision rendered is that of rejection. Not all emergent ideas are equal and not every insight is plausible. Fr. Jim knew this. He also knew that the new wine created from the vines of astute and authentic study needs to be respectfully and reverently approached.

The insights revealed today by indigenous peoples, women, cosmology, conscious evolution, spiritual traditions, newer/younger members in religious life, and theology deserve the best of our embrace at least through a respectful and transparent process of review and reflection. To do anything less personifies Fr. Jim's caution. In this new moment for Human Development, may we heed his wisdom and hone his skill as we open ourselves, our congregations, and our organizations to a future filled with hope by furthering the whole, holy and holistic development of persons.

*Carol Zinn, SSJ is a Sister of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia who served as United Nations, Non- Government Organization (UN-NGO) representative for 13 years, and as a member of her Congregation's General Council. She currently serves as the Past-President of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR).*



# IN MY OPINION



Vineyard  
Workers Need  
to be Healthy,  
Happy, and  
Nurtured to  
Tend God's  
Vines:  
Reflections  
on The  
Development  
of Persons, 33  
Years Later

*"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." - Luke 10:2*

In *The Development of Persons*, Fr. Jim Gill, Jesuit psychiatrist and founder of *Human Development* magazine, offers a thoughtful reflection on how the contemporary psychological theories and practice of the time (1981 when his article was published) can be best used to assist in the formation of Catholic seminarians and others in the Church so that the very best and state-of-the-art understanding of psychology and human development can be used in service of the Church. He discusses and reviews the contributions of many leading psychological theorists including those from the psychodynamic (e.g., Freud, Jung), humanistic (e.g., Rogers, Maslow, May), existential (e.g., Frankel), among other perspectives (e.g., gestalt, human potential movement, behavioral) and how they can be considered and integrated to inform seminary and religious formation training. He well articulates the conflicts that secular psychological theories and theological perspectives can have and highlights some of the downsides of psychologically driven approaches to human formation addressing, for example, the narcissism of the human

potential movement. Fr. Gill ends his article by sharing a clever, creative, and effective clinical experiment with one of his clerical clients as well as a gracious and generous call for dialogue. He offers *Human Development* magazine as a helpful forum for a rich, thoughtful, and engaged ongoing conversation about best strategies and reflections on the whole person formation of seminarians, clerics, and many others serving the Church.

In a nutshell, Fr. Gill wants the vineyard workers in the Luke 10 parable to have the necessary and best tools available to be healthy, happy, and nurtured as they work tending God's vines, an often challenging and stressful task to do. As someone who enjoys growing wine grapes in northern California as a hobby, I can certainly relate to this parable.

More than 30 years later, much of Fr. Gill's insights are still of great value and relevance for today. Tensions continue to exist between the mostly secular (and often anti-religious) psychological community and the religious community and clearly we have much more to do to apply the psychological, behavioral, and psychiatric understanding of the person to seminary and religious formation. Fr. Gill also wrote his landmark piece long before the clergy sexual abuse crisis made headline news which then and now begs the question, how can we better ensure that those who minister in the Church are psychologically healthy and not at risk of harming children or anyone? It also begs the question, what is it about the Church culture and organizational structures that aided and abetted the crisis of clerical sexual abuse? Or to continue the vineyard analogy, how can the workers tend the vineyard and harvest the fruit without damage to themselves, to others, or to the vineyard itself? Fr. Gill also wrote his



article before significant shifts in psychological understanding of the person moved from a more "guru based" approach (i.e., Who do you follow and believe in: Freud, Jung, Skinner, Maslow, Rogers, Perls, etc.?) to a more evidence-based, integrative, and biopsychosocial perspective that is prevalent today.

But what Fr. Gill started 33 years ago is as important and perhaps even more needed today. For our beloved Church to survive and thrive we must have a large number of outstanding and well equipped workers in the vineyard. We must have psychologically healthy and faithful men and women to answer God's call for service in the Church and to use best practices to train, nurture, and support their whole person development. We need to use the very best that psychology, psychiatry, education, and so forth have to offer to provide, not only formation training, but life-long learning and development.

In a world that is in tremendous need for skilled and healthy men and women of faith we need resources, such as Human Development magazine, perhaps more than ever. A forum for an ongoing interactive conversation that well integrates behavioral sciences such as psychology with theology and religious formation education and training is critically needed to do the best that we can to ensure that the vineyard workers of today are ready for duty. Additionally, we need to have ongoing assessment to determine if our methods are effective and a continuing conversation among those of us involved with the training of these

vineyard workers. Sharing our insights, wisdom, best practices, and providing corrective feedback to each other will best ensure that much quality fruit will be harvested by healthy and skilled laborers.

So, Fr. Gill was a visionary helping to find an important way to ensure that those who work closely with selecting, training, and nurturing our vineyard workers are fit and ready to go. We continue to need best practices and quality, evidence-based thinking from the psychological, psychiatric, education, and theological traditions to help those working in the field. Human Development is a continually evolving vineyard manual that needs help from you and all of our contributions.

**"In a world that is in tremendous need for skilled and healthy men and women of faith we need resources, such as Human Development magazine, perhaps more than ever."**

*Thomas G. Plante, PhD, ABPP is the Augustin Cardinal Bea, SJ University Professor and Director of the Spirituality and Health Institute at Santa Clara University as well as an Adjunct Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine. He can be reached at [tplante@scu.edu](mailto:tplante@scu.edu) and followed on Twitter @ThomasPlante.*





# NEW GENERATIONS OF CATHOLIC SISTERS – THE CHALLENGE OF DIVERSITY

Interview with Mary Johnson, S.N.D. de N., Patricia Wittberg, S.C., Mary L. Gautier, Ph.D.

*"Your faith, Lord, is unchanging from generation to generation..." Psalm*



# NEW GENERATIONS OF CATHOLIC SISTERS

*The Challenge of Diversity*



Mary Johnson, S.N.D.deN  
Patricia Wittberg, S.C.  
Mary L. Gautier

HD: Can you discuss how this book came about?

Mary J. – I had collected a large amount of data in 1999, which I had spoken from and had written a couple of articles about, but never had a chance to pull together into book form. I talked to Mary Gautier (Mary G.) and Pat Wittberg, S.C., (Pat) about a project wherein these data could be used while they were still fresh. We all acknowledged that the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) had also done a major project with The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) in 2009, which asked similar questions. We then asked Bro. Paul Bednarczyk, C.S.C., and the NRVC Board if we could have access to those data so that we could use both national data sets, with other research studies CARA had conducted over the years about vocations. We put them all together into a book that would be accessible for both religious and religious institutes and also the wider Church and beyond.

Pat – So the book is data based. As we say in the first chapter – there's so much in the media about "What's going on with the religious," and lots of times it is people's personal opinions about things, which is sometimes ideologically driven. CARA has such a rich trove of data but not enough time to analyze it in depth.

Mary G. – In fact, Mary Johnson was on our CARA Board in the early 2000's and she told us about her study, so we were aware of it when the NRVC came to CARA for a study of "New Vocations to Religious Life." We very intentionally used some of the same questions in the study that we completed in 2009. So it wasn't entirely accidental but it was certainly serendipitous that we had two data sets 10 years apart. It was really the ideal situation for a sociological analysis.



**HD:** Can you tell us more about the two major studies that you are citing here? It is amazing in the field of research to have such high response rates for both of these studies; can you discuss this a bit more?

**Mary J. –** In both studies, the response rate was 60 percent among religious institutes.

**Mary G. –** Yes, it indicates the very high level of interest in the topic, during both time periods.

**Mary J. –** Let me speak for the 1999 study and Mary G. can talk about 2009. I found there was a tremendous receptivity on the part of congregational leaders when they received the letter from me asking for data relative to their individual institutes and for a list of names and addresses of individual sisters who had entered since the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council. That required a good deal of work on the part of institutes. I was very grateful to all of the sisters in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) institutes and the Counsel of major Superiors of Women Religions (CMSWR) institutes, and to those institutes which are in neither group, who were willing to respond.

**Mary G. –** The 1999 study was very complicated with three separate surveys that were complex and quite long. Even more so, the response rate was significant and important. For the 2009 study, we had gotten a request from the NRVC to try to understand who was coming into religious life more contemporarily. We surveyed all of the religious institutes of both men and women, using the instrument, like I said, which was designed intentionally to use some of the

same questions from the 1999 study. We pulled out just the women's institutes for this book so we would be able to compare apples to apples. We still had a tremendous and rich amount of data, a quite complicated survey of the institutes themselves and then the survey of the new members that identified who had entered in the last 15 years.

**HD:** Just a point of clarification for the readers: when you have such a high response rate, what are the implications for the generalizability and validity of the study?

**Mary G. –** What it means is that you have a much higher level of confidence in the numbers that you're reporting. The higher the response rate the more likely that the particular statistic accurately represents the number that you would find in the population as a whole if you had the luxury of knowing the response of every single person who could have responded to the survey. It gives a great deal of confidence in the numbers.

**HD:** Can you say that this data is highly representative of Women Religious in the United States?

All answered: Yes.

**Mary J. –** These data also represent the shifts that religious institutes have experienced in the last fifteen years. We saw a decline in the number of institutes in the 10-year period between 1999 and 2009. Some of that numerical decline is due to the merger of individual provinces or regions within institutes. So for example, during

**"We wanted the focus to be on generations. First, the thrust of the book is generational analysis, about which a lot of people know nothing."**



that time period, the Sisters of Mercy merged 25 regions into a half-dozen. Other than the mergers, certain international institutes have closed their U.S. province and other institutes have come together as one. Some monasteries have merged and some have closed. All the hard work of a merger is for the sake of new life. Those are findings that are important for us to realize: That the array of charisms that we are accustomed to, are found today in about 400 institutes of women religious in the U.S.

**HD:** Your title: *New Generations of Catholic Sisters: The Challenge of Diversity*. Might you describe why that title seems to capture the richness of your research?

**Mary J. –** We wanted the focus to be on generations. First, the thrust of the book is generational analysis, about which a lot of people know nothing. We certainly would argue that it should be part of the critical social analysis done by the Church. Second, we talked about diversity and by diversity we mean not only generational diversity, but also the diversity within each generation, i.e., age, racial, ethnic, and ecclesiological diversity as well. We hope the book will inspire people in the Church to think more deeply about these layers of diversity and see them as being essential to the analysis of a much more complex Church.

**Pat –** It's important to realize this, because it's so common for any group of people to think everybody else believes/thinks, or should believe/think, like they do. We are aware that the major ethnic groups with whom we may come into contact (Latinos, Asians, Africans, etc.) may think, respond, and do things differently. But, there's so much more variety than that fact alone. If you're not aware of it, you're in danger of closing off people who would have had a religious vocation and who would have thought of entering, but who wouldn't have entered "them" (whoever "they" are) or an institute "like that" (whatever "like that" means).

**Mary G. –** In other words, stereotyping.

**HD:** If you could flesh this concept out for the lay reader, we need to break that down for our

readers. Could you describe what you mean by "Generational Analysis?"

**Pat –** I wrote my master's thesis on this in the 1970s and forgot about it for 20 some years. It is only recently that I realized that other people might be interested in the idea of generations. What I would argue is that a generational cohort is a distinct culture. It makes a difference whether or not you grew up as a child in a prosperous and peaceful time or, for example, in the Great Depression. It makes a difference whether you grew up in a city neighborhood with inter-connected sidewalks where you could get on your bike and explore.

There was an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* recently where parents talked about how, when they were little, they would get on the subway and go all over New York City. Children can't do that now. It makes a difference if you grew up in a time with less traffic, less paranoid parents, or getting from A to B without crossing a major highway. As compared to growing up in a suburban area with all of these little cul-de-sac streets, but in order to get out of that plot of 5-6 dead-end streets you had to cross a major highway so your parents chauffeured you everywhere. It makes a difference if you grew up listening to radio, or watching TV with 3 networks, whereas now these kids are on the Internet from the time they are born. It makes a difference how people relate to one another, how they think; whether they're optimistic or pessimistic about the future. Generational analysis is looking at some basic assumptions that people of different generations make about how the world runs and what they hold important.

So, if you grew up in the Great Depression, the most important thing might be job security because you saw your parents fired and you went hungry. But those who grew up in the 1990's, as welcomed "trophy children" were fawned over by their parents and given everything. The world was their oyster. A lot of them are not so much interested in job security. They want a job that fulfills them, or (the more kind interpretation) one that enables them to make a difference to the world. This attitude



makes it hard for them to find a job in the Great Recession, but they are still optimistic, because of their childhood experiences.

Again, there's another generation coming up who have as their earliest memories terror attacks in New York Washington and Pennsylvania on 9/11, and they've never known a time when we weren't fighting terrorism. A lot of their families were impacted by the recession of 2007, a lot of them saw their parents lose their jobs, or saw their homes go underwater in mortgages. Just yesterday, I read that millennials are into saving intensely, and don't trust the stock market.

Logically then, there are also different generational mindsets with regard to Catholicism. It makes a difference whether you grew up memorizing the Baltimore Catechism and in a totally Catholic culture where you didn't even know a non-Catholic, as compared to the 1970's where there was a hiatus after Vatican II and we didn't have the new religious education model yet. Basically, generations are cultures. The Catholic environment that we grew up in shapes us.

**HD:** This is so critical; you've tapped such a challenging grace and opportunity for religious and for the Church. Can you help us understand this more?

**Pat** – One of the things that your readers, and every woman and man religious, should be aware of is that one aspect of generational culture is that each new generation “scrambles” the ideological packages that people have. As Cardinal Bernardin said, in his “consistent ethic of life,” the seamless garment image, it doesn't make sense to be against abortion, that destroys human life, and then be for capital punishment. Cardinal Bernardin was attempting to get people to be consistent in their support of life. We package things together. If you're politically conservative, there's no logical reason for being against abortion while being for the war in Iraq and capital punishment and against gun control.

So what happens with the younger generations? They scramble the packages. You often have



people in what we called in the book *The Vatican II Generation*, who think that younger Catholics' desire for Eucharistic Adoration, Gregorian chant, the Rosary, and so forth, is a sign that they are reactionaries, that they want to “go back” to pre-Vatican II days. But, basically it doesn't mean that to them at all. It's not at all impossible for young Catholics to be for Eucharistic Adoration and same sex marriage, as an example. This stereotyping causes so much unnecessary harm and hurt. It literally is killing us in our society, not allowing us to have civil debates and conversations. It is no different in our Church. It is killing vocations to religious life.

**HD:** What you just explained to us, correct me if we are wrong, is that perhaps this is the bridge we've been missing. We have not really built a bridge yet to heal divisions, misunderstandings and misconceptions. Are we interpreting this





correctly?

**Pat** – That's it! We have to listen to each other. We have to get into the lived experiences of the other. People have to imagine, at both ends of it, what would it be like not to remember the thing that was key in their life. I've given you generations of mostly white middle class people in the United States. African Americans have their own set of generations. What would it be like not to remember the Civil Rights Movement? Ethnic cultures crosshatch with generational cultures. What would it be like not to remember X, Y or Z that was important to your ethnic group? We need to actually talk to each other to see why people do what they do rather than hold stereotypes about each other—whether the old or the young: “Well you did this, therefore you must be this way.” This hurts and destroys unity and community.

**HD:** In psychology, we call this making an “attributional error,” in that we assume when someone believes a certain reality that they must be that reality. What is this reality sociologically?

**Mary J.** – One issue that concerns us today is that some in the older generations of diocesan priests and some older members of religious institutes of men and women tend to make a common error when they use the term “going backward” when describing what some younger religious and seminarians are doing in terms of their behaviors. Many do not even know that history. It is not going backward for them. They are creating symbols that make sense to them at this moment in time. They are trying to carve out contemplative space in a noisy, frantic culture. We need to challenge one another about this notion of going backward and instead focus on what are the needs today. If we could delve more deeply into understanding the younger generations and their cultures, we could, as multiple generations in the Church, go forward together.

**HD:** It seems that there are many misconceptions or myths about the realities associated with the current data and facts about women religious today. Can you discuss those with us? What are the misconceptions that you seem to challenge and why are they just not correct in their essential assumptions?

**Mary J.** – The first myth is that nobody is entering. The second myth is that there are people entering but they are going to the more traditional institutes. We found that there are 1,200 women in formation: 150 are in monasteries; the other 1,050 or so are evenly divided between LCWR and CMSWR institutes. We realize that there are more LCWR institutes than CMSWR institutes but the numbers entering institutes associated with those two groups are virtually identical. LCWR and CMSWR institutes each have a 50 percent retention rate as well, which means that neither group is better than the other at attracting and keeping vocations. Those findings really break through a lot of the myths.







**Pat** – One myth is that only the traditional orders are attracting new vocations and that, of the rest of women religious just modeled themselves on the conservative pattern, they would attract vocations, too. But there are many conservative orders, like we say in the book, that have no one in formation. The percentage of CMSWR member groups with no vocations is only slightly smaller than the percentage of LCWR member groups that have no one in formation. The one thing that is different between the two groups, and challenging, is that the CMSWR orders do tend to draw a younger demographic.

**Mary G.** – The older women tend to be attracted to some of the LCWR affiliated institutes and the youngest women, there are exceptions of course, tend to be more attracted to a few CMSWR institutes.

**Mary J.** – This is yet another myth, that Sisters who wear habits attract members, but we found that there are orders of sisters who wear habits that do not attract members. The media has a stereotype that they continue to perpetuate; sisters in habits are all getting new members. We say in the book that there are only a small number of institutes with a significant number of new entrants. The majority of institutes in LCWR and CMSWR have either small numbers of new members, or no one. These are really challenging data that should inform our deliberations.

**HD:** There are some very challenging data that you're putting out there; numbers of religious women are clearly declining. Do you want to talk about the challenge in that?

**Mary G.** – I'll talk about it from a demographic perspective first. What we're doing here consciously and what the press does unconsciously is compare the Church today to the Church at its peak or high point of the 50s and 60s. That was a very unusual point in time for the Church in the United States and had some very particular outcomes, for example the numbers entering religious life from World War II to Vatican II were unprecedented. An unusually high number of men and women were entering religious life.

It had not happened like that any time in the past and has not been repeated since then, but we continue to measure ourselves against that yardstick and therefore we see what appears to be the Church in tremendous decline. Coming off of that bubble that happened between World War II and Vatican II in the 40s, 50s, and 60s, those members that entered in such large numbers during those years are now dying. If you compare that period to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, things were very, very different. This recent high point was a unique period, so we are comparing ourselves to something that happened only one time in history.

**HD:** It was an anomaly for dioceses, for male religious and for women, that we keep judging ourselves on and it has implications in all of your analysis, doesn't it?

**Pat** – Sure, it was an anomaly in this country, anyway. At times in history and various cultures where there have been these kinds of bubbles, I guess you would call it. A lot of this has to do with the larger societies in general. What are the other opportunities for women? In some places, such as Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or Quebec, not only were there few options for women, but also if you have a country that is dominated by a religiously different conqueror (in Ireland and Quebec, by Great Britain, or English-speaking Canadians), then Catholicism becomes a statement of ethnic identity, and so was entering religious life, even more so. In other words, there have been times and places where “bubbles” in religious vocations occurred, and the 1950s was one such “bubble” in this country.

Don't you think there are parallels globally, say with the Polish or in the Irish Church?

**Pat** – Yes, Poland now is having the same sort of decline, as is Ireland. It's slowed down quite a bit. As near as we can tell from looking at things, more women than men used to enter religious orders and that is no longer true in this country or in Western Europe. It's partly a reflection of this that the Catholic Church in general is losing women at least as rapidly as it is men among the millennials.

**Mary G.** – We found the same thing in American



Catholics in Transition, there is one chapter in particular about how women in the U.S. used to outrank men in terms of Mass attendance, far more women attending Mass and displaying attitudes of orthodoxy. Now, they are identical or a little below men on those attitudes and behaviors. This has huge consequences, not just for religious institutes and all of their ministries, but for parish life and diocesan life. If you don't have women to volunteer for parish work and if women no longer think that the Catholic Church is important in their lives, what happens to the next generation?

**HD:** What are other findings of your study? Because I think that is what you were just pointing out here in our discussion. Can you help us with this?

**Mary J. –** In the book we also refer to a study that CARA did within the last couple of years, called “Consideration of Priesthood and Religious Life among Never-Married U.S. Catholics.” When women were asked in that study “Had they ever considered religious life?” a quarter of a million said yes, they had considered a vocation very seriously. Most of the women are now older but this begs the question, “What have institutes done or not done and what has the whole Church done or not done to build structures of discernment so that women can have the space and the support they need to discern whether or not they are being called by God to become a sister?”

**HD:** This seems very important because you make the analogy at the same time as retreat houses are being closed; we may need what they did even more today, correct?

**Mary J. –** The number of Catholics who are now serving in volunteer corps or ministries to those in poverty across the U.S. is large. This is a potential pool for new members of religious institutes. Structures of support have got to be built for those young people so that they can discern what that service means, what life in community means, what simple living means, what prayer means to them now that they have spent a year in service. How is God speaking

to them now? This is an untapped resource for us. I have met some wonderful sisters who have entered after a year or two of service. We need to address this need for structures of discernment quickly and with imagination. Schools provided structures in years past; we need new and varied structures for today if we are to attract vocations.

**Mary G. –** Another analogy can be made with Catholic schools, too. You can't leave a child on the waiting list for years, for example – life goes on. We need to be more thoughtful and pro-active in pursuing these young potential candidates. They are out there, seriously considering a vocation to religious life. But our structures need to adapt to reach them or they will not be there any longer; we have to be more proactive and creative here.

**HD:** You use a wonderful story throughout your book. The story is about a religious candidate named “Maria.” Can you discuss her, her questions and struggles that seem spiritual, experiential, cultural and sociological? Why is Maria's example so important in the book for you?

**Mary J. –** Maria is a composite of many women whom we have met over the years who experience resistance from many individuals and structures in religious life, the Church and society, as they attempt to explore a vocation to vowed religious life. They are at a time in their life when they need support and help in discernment and clarification, but in many cases, they are not receiving it. So we wanted to draw a picture of a person who embodied a lot of the tension and conflict that we have encountered in younger people as they sincerely try to navigate the maze of discerning a vocation today. I think Maria has had such an impact on people because she's an individual and we live in a highly individualistic society. She is also so clear in terms of trying to pursue this dream of hers and the resistance she encounters is so real. Everyone can identify with it because we are embedded in that resistance in many Church and societal structures. Hopefully her example raises to critical consciousness how deep and thick this resistance truly is.





**Pat** – When it was first proposed, I thought it was a bit hokey, but I was wrong - everybody loves her!

**Mary G.** – She really speaks to people and her story expresses key points very eloquently.

**HD:** The chapter on religious theories and practices is quite useful. What are the problems as you see them that we need to navigate here? Are there any specific suggestions that we can take from this chapter?

**Mary J.** – One of the things we say is that we need to lift up the document, *Mutuae Relationes*. We had written that before Pope Francis started talking about the document. It refers to the relationship between bishops and religious in the Church and it was released in 1978. As we continue to navigate issues between the hierarchy and religious institutes, religious need to be involved in the process of reworking the document because it is key to the building of future structures of the Church around the world.

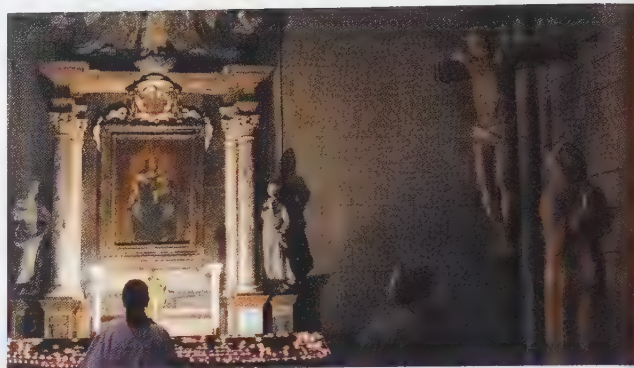
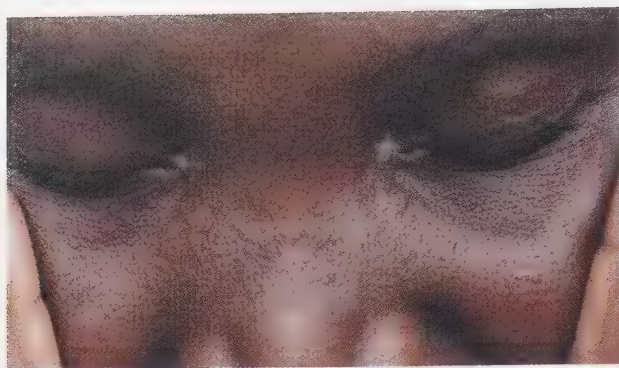
**HD:** Chapters three and four are truly profound and challenging. You point to the importance, indeed the centrality, in distinguishing elements

of “identity” that hit us right between the eyes. Can you talk to us about the centrality of “identity?”

**Pat** – We say in the book that 85% of younger Catholics would be considered, for want of better terms, progressive, and 15% are traditional. There are hundreds of institutes in this country. Let’s talk about this in imagery that most folks get: when you go get ice cream, you see all the menu choices – there could be 51 choices and in many cases even more – different flavors, and there are also more “flavors” in religious life. Why are we not making these choices apparent? One of the things that millennials strongly resist is anyone who tries to stereotype them as millennials. They are the most heterogeneous generation we’ve ever had and they know it. So having just one form of religious life just isn’t going to work! Identity is not necessarily the manner of dress, as in wearing a habit; it’s much larger.

**Mary J.** – I think we need to reflect more deeply on our rich symbol systems in religious institutes. In many ways, religious symbols have been used to make one ideological case or another, but I think it is deeper than that. Many institutes are looking at issues of identity





through the lens of their charisms. That is where depth, not superficiality, resides. Which symbols and rituals make sense in light of the charism and mission of an institute? And why? We need to be articulate about how all of these cohere in our religious life and in each institute. We must define our own symbol systems or others will define them.

**HD:** What do you find as the essential aspects of this “common core” as you describe it? Challenging the “Vatican II” sisters and the “millennial” sisters to really stand in each other’s shoes and look at various forms of prayer, like Eucharistic adoration. “It’s not our experience or need” and yet we have to enter that in order to have common forms of prayer and worship. Can you help us navigate these stormy waters?

**Pat** – Listen to each other.

**Mary J.** – So many religious institutes are spending time on issues of contemplative listening and contemplation. We have to understand that for the younger people, these rituals are where some find time and space for contemplation. This connects to what we said earlier about “going backward.” This is not going backward, this is carving out time and space in a really frantic world, which does not provide many structures to support and sustain contemplation.

For millennials, they see this as oriented to the present, not to the past. They think this way because it is new for them. The bigger question is why and how do they find meaning in these symbols and rituals. In order to find that out, we have to ask, not judge, the young people

around us. Also, they would not put the label “conservative” on a religious practice, on a sacred practice. We need to rid our vocabulary of the words “liberal” and “conservative” as they apply to a religious practice because, in their eyes, those labels just do not apply to a religious practice. For some, there are ethnic or familial ties associated with these practices. We have to remember that when we enter into spiritual practices that give life meaning, we are walking on sacred ground.

**Mary G.** – What those words are doing is building unnecessary stereotypes. This process keeps us stuck in the past. Who would want to be attracted to this life when they see this division and lack of compromise?

**HD:** You have asked us to step “out of the box” and imagine what relationships might be like if we seriously take a look at all of this data. Most significantly, how do we relate to each other and how do we relate to our apostolic ministry? Do you want to talk about the strategies that can play into a possible resurgence in religious life, if this is possible?

**Mary J.** – One young religious said to me recently that Pope Francis embodies the balance between contemplation and action. This balance was talked about in all of our surveys. It’s incumbent upon us to move to a place where they can see that individual prayer and communal prayer are essential and that times of leisure, study and reflection are valued. They want a communal space that is healthy and happy. They want to see ministries that are radical and on the margins of society. They want to see us responding to the needs of those



“...it’s so encouraging to “see the light bulb go on” with young people who are considering a religious vocation.”

who have been made poor by the structures of the world. They want to be part of something bigger than themselves. It is that simple and that complicated.

**Pat** – Sometimes things can turn on a dime. One of the aspects of the whole stock market crash in 2007-2008, where all of the stocks were going up and all of the mathematical analysts kept saying that based on the past performance they’re going to keep going in this direction, and then suddenly, within a couple weeks the whole thing fell apart. That can happen with vocations, too. Right now, the millennial generation is the least religiously connected; 33% said they have no religion at all. That doesn’t necessarily mean that they will continue to be that way, or that future generations will. People don’t follow mathematical projections. It may very well be that religious life could continue to decline, or it could suddenly grow explosively. We simply don’t know.

**Mary G.** – What we do know is that it’s not going to look the same as it did in the past.

**Mary J.** – It won’t look like it did in the past because in the past it never looked like it did in the past. The key thing is that the vows are the glue that holds religious life together; they bind the individual to God and to the institute. The personal and social dimensions of the vows are desperately needed today, and they are attracting new generations. They know well the challenges facing the Church and the world, and they see that religious life can be a place to provide a unique response to God and God’s people.

**ID:** Before we conclude, what would you

suggest people start doing differently as a result of these enormous, rich data and your reflections on this data? Can you speak about the hope that you see for religious women today?

**Mary G.** – For me, the hope that I see is that it’s so encouraging to “see the light bulb go on” with young people who are considering a religious vocation. It is hopeful to me when I see an interest in vocations among millennials and to see that young people today are still interested in making a contribution with their life by means of a lifetime commitment. That’s the hard thing for millennials to get their head around but we see it all of the time. We see it in young women who are expressing interest in a vocation to religious life by making a commitment to a year of volunteer service, such as to AmeriCorps, or any number of other wonderful initiatives. We can be able to raise that up, to raise awareness among millennials that this service could be related to a vocational call they may be feeling but have yet to express. God could be speaking to you, just as God spoke to Mary 2000 years ago. God could be speaking to you through the experiences that you’re having. That’s exciting.

**Pat** – I think religious vocations are, well, I think they’re like crabgrass. You can pave your yard over with concrete and you’ll still get crabgrass in the cracks. In every religious tradition people want to do more, and Catholicism has always benefited by having religious life to fulfill that desire. We need to have strong and vibrant religious institutes. If we don’t, the people that are most committed will desert us for some other religion or denomination. I think putting religious life out there, and saying,



“The Catholic Church offers so much that young people today don’t realize because they’ve not been exposed to it.”

“look at this neat thing,” and putting it out there in the language that resonates with the different spiritual “hungers” which exist in every subsequent generation, is vitally important.

Secondly, I think one of the things that would be a real help is discernment. Young people have so many choices to make. Marriage, college, career... It is key to mentor young people in discernment – where is God in this? Spreading the knowledge of Catholic discernment and prayer more widely would be a tremendous service. The Catholic Church offers so much that young people today don’t realize because they’ve not been exposed to it. If we could just show them these riches, in all their different flavors and many varieties, people would come and taste the goodness that is religious life and of being a Catholic today.

**Mary J.** – Across every generation of the last 2000 years some people have been so captivated by the person of Jesus Christ, and have loved him so much, that they have given everything for Him. They find that the road they took was more unusual than the road taken by most of their contemporaries and that even though it was a difficult road at times, it was worth their life. We, the three co-authors, believe that the Spirit is stirring in the hearts of young people today. As in each time in history, some of these young people need support as they try to discern how they are called to be a disciple, and we believe it is incumbent upon the Church, the whole Church, and especially religious institutes, to provide the gift of support that is needed for the discernment of that precious call.

**HD:** This book can change people. It bridges the conservative-liberal divide and you did that brilliantly. That’s what we need to highlight today in the Church. It is so needed and we need those bridges. We have got to build those bridges quickly. Thank you for this great book and your hard work. We are all better for it! God’s peace!



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# IN MY OPINION



When the research on vocations and the future of women's religious institutes was published in the book, *New Generations of Sisters*, it immediately inspired and challenged

sisters throughout the country. Vocation directors at regional meetings made the text the centerpiece of their gatherings, small and large communities of sisters both agreed and argued over its content, and the newest novice in my own congregation asked me for my copy of the book after she read the review I did for the NRVC publication "Horizon." To say the least, the book filled a need felt keenly by sisters across the board, as it provided extensive data on the demographics, the neuralgic issues, and the future potential for renewed involvement in religious life.

The current interview in *Human Development* adds even more perspective as the authors reflect on their own work. Two ideas so effectively discussed in the interview – generational analysis and the need for discernment opportunities – seem to me to have enormous implications for religious institutes. As sisters endeavor to encourage vocations by examining their own lifestyles, including the balance between and integration of prayer and work, community and solitude, they need to add to their considerations the needs of potential new members.

The authors explain that generational differences have always existed because of the extremely varied experiences of people who grew up in different cohorts – a concept we understand

quite well. The variance for religious institutes compared to the wider population is that members of widely separate age cohorts actually share life in all its aspects – prayer, ministry, recreation, schedules, etc. Adapting to the varied preferences of others requires patience and forbearance, perhaps most especially for those who are millennials and have few companions of their own age. Mary J's insight about the unfortunate common use of the term "going backward" to describe some behaviors of younger members needs to be pondered if we are to understand them and accept them. She asks the best question yet: can we not focus on what are the needs of today? Instead we may tend to be critical and judgmental of younger people. But it is not only the needs of the young that need attention, but also of older sisters. Few of us, for example, are interested in a midnight movie! Yet, the giant's share of members are older and newer members lack companionship. The point is that we must search for ways we can "go forward together."

A second idea that is helpfully elaborated in the interview concerns the importance of providing opportunities and structures for discernment of vocation. In the book, the story of the composite imaginary "searcher" named Maria highlights how the scarcity of accurate and comprehensive information about religious life can deter anyone who has a glimmer of an idea of pursuing a vocation. Yet, many young people have an impulse to give of themselves, especially those who have experienced a year or two of volunteer service or encountered pockets of great need where they believe they could provide valuable assistance. Others may have had encounters with prayer groups or evangelization efforts that lead them to consider dedicating their lives. The authors point out the need for avenues to identify who these people are and then provide structures that serve as an environment for discernment.



Two proposals of the authors have great merit: become more aware of and accepting of those who belong to distinct generations separated by many years and make discernment available to those who might be considering religious life, first by identifying who they are and then providing a setting where they can discern their vocation.

Reasons for hope about the future of religious life are integrated throughout the book, only a few of which could be highlighted in a short interview.

Here are some examples:

Literally hundreds of thousands of young women have seriously considered religious life. With suitable and well-publicized opportunities for discernment they well might follow through on their initial desires.

Pope Francis has generated new enthusiasm for the Church, with its contemplative and active dimensions that appeal to so many people. Many people have expressed their appreciation for sisters in recent years, perhaps never as vigorously in times past.

The many ways religious life is lived out – the varied approaches to community and ministry – give abundant alternatives from which someone who is interested in pursuing a vocation can choose.

These are a few of the conditions that reinforce a feeling of hope. We also might ask for more support from bishops and parents, priests and teachers as they reflect on their words and thoughts about women religious. Of course, all sisters can examine their own lives and their openness to new members who reflect values and behaviors that may seem a bit alien to the long-time members. We need to widen the space

of our communal tents so that all are welcome. We also must practice with our words what St. Peter admonishes: “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Peter 3:15).

“The point is that we must search for ways we can “go forward together.”

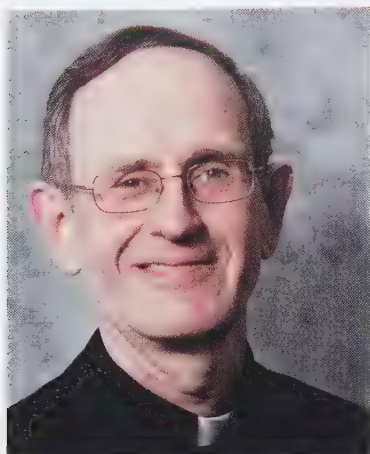
*Sister Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., Ph.D.  
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University of St. Thomas.*

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# IN MY OPINION



The authors of *New Generations of Catholic Sisters* have performed a valuable service to anyone engaged in formation work or in leadership in religious communities, female or male.

One could be tempted to limit the relevance of their work but several points demand attention, especially in the calm, data-driven way in which the authors present them. The commitment to avoiding easy ideological analyses makes this book a text that we will discuss for years to come.

Three points struck me forcefully, especially given my work in formation. First, the discussion of 'generations' as cultures provides a very helpful framework within which to discuss the tensions inherent in religious life at the moment. As they discuss the young women in the study, they resolutely reject the easy description of the desire for a more 'devotional' life as retro in any way. Certainly many of the young men, with whom I have dealt, combined a desire for a more symbol-rich prayer life with a deep commitment to service to the poor and desire to preach the Gospel. Easy either-or categories that seem so logical in fact betray exactly the kind of ideological and fear-based perspective the authors describe. Such categorization also undercuts the kind of careful listening needed today if we are to discern how God calls us in the present. The failure to engage in the kind of discernment, for which the authors call, too often leaves us with

communities structured by monologues. We need not only to listen but to discern, something required not only of those interested in religious life. The authors note the latter, but would profit from a broader call to a discerning perspective.

Second, the underlying call to attend to questions of identity strikes a chord for me, and not only with respect to my work in formation. The last Jesuit General Congregation struggled to understand our sense of identity as distinct from either function or structure. The attempt to craft a document almost floundered since the language required bore none of the easy certainties one might have liked. Instead, it forced us into precisely the same symbol-rich language so central to those in formation today. The sense of a 'fire kindling other fires', a deliberate focus on the work of Christ's Spirit in the community, invited the members of the Society to a more reflective and prayerful approach to identity, much along the lines sketched out by the authors of this new book. That would, however, lack the kind of clarity of category in which one can rest secure; identity remains a quest, like any relationship. On that note, this interview hits home again in a helpful way, though not one designed to drive away uncertainty.

Third, the historical context at the end of the interview affirms and highlights a reality many have noted but few actually engage, namely that the 'frame of reference' normally used for gauging 'success' in religious life remains the profoundly abnormal period between World War II and Vatican II. No doubt many sociological factors caused the massive numbers entering religious life at that time. This simple historical reality helps undercut many of the arguments on whether Vatican II caused the decline; it invites us instead to ask what the present reality actually has to say to us. That



invites us to ask for a variety of new markers for religious life, something the authors begin. Rather than mere arguments about habits or not, they enter into the deeper issue of how one engages the openness to service and meaning in contemporary culture. Certainly among the young with whom I have worked, such dialogue and discernment seems a far more promising path to take than ideological debates. This is a profoundly new generation requiring new categories. This new tome may very well help us begin the process of listening, discerning, and responding to a rich and novel culture.

With the points from the article in mind, one must be wary of any grand schemes regarding formation or vocation promotion. For the most part, we have lodged much of our reflection on what would be 'helpful' in the hands of those with significant experience and wisdom, but who often represent a very different age. Forming new religious who come from a modern, technologically savvy culture represents more than just tinkering with an existing model; rather, the authors of this text tend to ask us to engage a process of listening closely to the distinctly different call of the spirit in a contemporary age. How does one structure non-ideological attentiveness? How does one discern a proper response today? The authors rightly note that this requires time and a freedom to listen. If one desires to move beyond narrow categories and beyond simple either-or solutions, honest dialogue among generations becomes a necessity.

At the same time, though, the second point mentioned above plays a critical role. The dialogue and attentiveness cannot eschew

some form; one cannot simply begin *de novo*. Here careful understanding of the core of not simply of the charism of the particular religious community but the way in which that charism has given rise to a distinct identity. The authors wisely reject attempts to ground this in structure or function, but in the lived experience of the community. For example, many communities share an Ignatian charism, but each manifests that in a very different identity. One may joke about being able to recognize a member of a given community, but there is also real truth in the statement as well. Jesuits at GC 35 struggled with that, and appropriately so. Engagement

“... the authors... ask us to engage a process of listening closely to the distinctly different call of the Spirit in a contemporary age.”

with such a symbol-rich reality will provide not so much ready answers as an appropriate context within which to enter into the inter-generational dialogue and discernment needed today, emphasizing a shared reality lived perhaps in a variety of modes, some delighting in the freedom bequeathed by Vatican II, others finding consolation in a richer devotional life that empowers in a different way the service of that justice and peace that are the hallmarks of the Reign of God.

*Ronald Mercier, S.J., received his doctorate in Christian Ethics from Regis College, University of Toronto, and is currently the Provincial of the Central and Southern Province of the Jesuits of the US.*





# POPE FRANCIS & A COMMITTED LIFE WELL-LIVED

Father Louis J. Cameli



Recently, organizers of the Chicago priests' convocation asked me to address the theme of "Pope Francis and Priesthood Well Lived." When I spoke to the Chicago priests on that theme, I was also convinced that what I presented had great significance for others seeking to live a dedicated and committed life—as religious, as laypersons, indeed, as anyone wanting to follow Jesus faithfully.

In this article, I re-cap my remarks to the Chicago priest audience, but with the hope that they will benefit a much wider audience. What does this fascinating figure of Pope Francis say to those who serve as priests? Or live as religious? Or bring their faith to the world as laypersons? What do the gestures and actions of Pope Francis mean for all of us?

As I explored this topic, I became more and more grateful for the opportunity to study Pope Francis' teaching and pastoral style. Intuitively, I knew that Pope Francis represented a new moment in the life of the Church and her renewal, but I did not fully appreciate what that meant. After my study and reflection, I now have a much better sense of the man, this moment in the life of the Church, and the stirrings of the Spirit.

Each Pope has been a blessing, a different and unique blessing, for the Church. Now, God has given us Francis, a man who draws deeply from his Ignatian roots and pastoral experience.



Here are the five questions. Now, they may sound strange, but, trust me, they are important.

1. Is the Pope Catholic?
2. Is Rush Limbaugh really right about the Pope, that he is a Marxist?
3. Do Pope Francis' famous words—"who am I to judge?"—fundamentally mean the triumph of moral relativism in the Catholic Church and that nothing really matters very much anymore?
4. Why, as his own priests in the diocese of Rome asked him, does the Pope beat up on priests?
5. How can I replicate the Francis effect in my parish, so that everyone will love me?

## IS THE POPE CATHOLIC?

You laugh, but as one wag said, "You know the man is a Jesuit and so all bets are off." But let me break the suspense and provide you with an answer. Yes, the Pope is Catholic. In fact, he is an über or super Catholic and in a particular way that has considerable implications for how we live out our priesthood.

Within a year, the Pope captured the imagination not only of people within the Catholic Church but also those well beyond the Church. *Time Magazine*, as you know, named him "Man of the Year"—something remarkable but not entirely out of range. More remarkable was the *New Yorker* magazine giving him a place on the cover and naming him a "world changer." And the most improbable of all was the leading national LGBT magazine, *The Advocate*, naming him "Person of the Year." How, in such a short time and in very secularized circles, did he achieve such recognition? What did he do? And how did he do it?

The initial and most obvious impression Pope Francis makes is with his humanity. He came out on the balcony after his election a bit stunned and bowed his head and asked people to pray for him. He paid his own hotel bill. He has reached

out to people in very physical ways, embracing the poor and the diseased. He manifests a deep humanity. Often, he seems to be everybody's ideal grandfather.

And yet, there is something more here than a very human and kind person. He clearly and evidently holds within himself a deep sense of faith. Often, he speaks of God's mercy. And frequently, he marvels at the detectable traces of God among us, especially in our relationships with one another. In other words, he clearly and unambiguously represents divinity. He stands for God.

What has he done? What does he represent? He gives witness to the extraordinary synthesis of humanity and divinity that is at the heart of Catholic faith which is both incarnational and sacramental. That faith means humanity and divinity are together.

This direct expression of Catholic faith is a great and fascinating novelty in a world where God and humanity have seemed too incompatible. For secularists and atheists, to be human you must eliminate God. For religious extremists and fundamentalists, to be godly, you must deny humanity—so much so that religion can employ violence against human beings and kill them, as is happening at this very moment in Iraq and Syria and elsewhere in the world.

This embrace—in one man—of God and humanity and standing for that synthesis is extraordinarily exciting in a world that has generally assumed the incompatibility of the divine and the human. Now, people look at Pope Francis and see someone who is both very human and very faith-filled. He embodies what we identify as Christian humanism, which is the key to the modern and the post-modern world's riddle of God versus humanity. And that Christian humanism is part and parcel of his Ignatian patrimony with its well-known commitment to education, to science, and even to the arts.

With the worldwide coverage of the Pope and his impact, what we have discovered is perhaps a previously undetected hunger in the world for spiritual leaders to guide, to inspire, to accept,



to offer hope, and to link us to transcendence. And that leadership, as we see in Pope Francis, can draw from the great Catholic tradition of incarnational and sacramental faith, a faith that brings together humanity and divinity.

What are the implications for priests and others? No doubt, there are many. From a theological perspective, we need to renew and recalibrate our sense of the Incarnation and our sense of sacramentality. We need to pay attention to our humanity or humanness as the primary vehicle for communicating the presence of God in this world. In this context, I am drawn to the words of St. John Paul II in *Pastores dabo vobis*: "...the priest should mould his human personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ the Redeemer..." (n. 43) Practically, this means unfolding our capacity for empathy, honing our skills in listening, expanding our appreciation of the unique beauty of each individual, and learning more surely how to risk entering into the lives of others—all the very things we see in Pope Francis' interaction with people.

Is there more to this practical sense of incarnation, sacramentality, and humanity? Yes, of course, there is much more. And we need to challenge each other to discover those dimensions and live them out. It is a life-long task to pray over and talk about how we ought to mould our humanity so that it becomes a more and more apt sacramental instrument for communicating the redeeming presence of

"He gives witness to the extraordinary synthesis of humanity and divinity that is at the heart of Catholic faith..."







Jesus Christ to people today. And in this process, I believe that we will also retrieve a genuine Christian humanism that breaks the deadlock of God versus humanity.

Is the Pope Catholic? Yes, in the very fullest sense of that word, and so should we be—with a living and vibrant incarnational faith.

### IS RUSH LIMBAUGH REALLY RIGHT ABOUT THE POPE, THAT HE IS A MARXIST?

Once again, to cut the suspense, let me repeat what you may have already heard. When someone told the Pope that Rush Limbaugh had said that he was a Marxist, the Pope replied that Marxism was wrong but that he knew many Marxists who were good people and so he did not take offense.

But what would lead Mr. Limbaugh to characterize the Pope as a Marxist? A good part of what prompts Rush Limbaugh in this direction can be found in Pope Francis' exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* [The Joy of the Gospel: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World; hereafter, EG]. As its title indicates, EG is a document on evangelization and its challenges. So, you might expect the context and the arenas of challenge to be: secularization, relativism, moral decline, and perhaps the general human quest for meaning. Instead, the Pope begins his document on evangelization by setting an unexpected context. Surprisingly, the context is an economic analysis of structures that doom a good part of the human race to be trapped in poverty. Later as he explores positive

directions for the Church's efforts to evangelize, he again begins with the social dimension of evangelization. In all of this concern for economics and poverty and perhaps even the redistribution of wealth, Mr. Limbaugh detects Marxist undertones. Is he correct in his assessment?

The context for the challenge of evangelization, as Pope Francis describes it, is rooted in an astute discernment that he makes of the environment or the culture in which the vast majority of people find themselves. And we also find ourselves in this culture. It is a culture of acquisition and consumption. And this largely shapes our lives together and individually. Let me repeat this in a somewhat different way. The dominant movement and climate is captured in these words, "I choose to acquire and consume," or—in other words—"I decide to get and enjoy." This shapes the culture and the environment of the world, and it is absolutely antithetical to the Gospel. If the ethos of the world centers on acquiring and consuming, the ethos of the gospel is self-giving in generative and faithful love. In simple language, the opposing movements are getting versus giving.

Think, for a moment, of the grand trajectory of the gospel. It begins with Jesus' revelation of the heart of the Father in his dialogue with Nicodemus. We heard this in the Gospel of Saint John: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (John 3:16) This describes the self-giving of God who could do no more than give us His Son, so that we could live. Self-giving in generative and faithful love. The Son comes among us and



I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd  
lays down his life for the sheep."

describes his purpose, his mission: "For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45) Again, self-giving in generative and faithful love. The same message is repeated when Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (John 10:11) Finally, that same self-giving in generative and faithful love is instituted and memorialized in the Eucharist: "This is my body, which is given for you." (Luke 22:19)

In contrast to this grand trajectory of the Gospel that speaks of self-giving in generative and faithful love, we stand and live in its opposite, the culture of acquisition and consumption. This culture easily bends us in on ourselves and fosters a fundamental narcissism. In this culture of life, especially the vulnerable life of the unborn, the sick, and the dying, becomes "disposable" in the word of Pope Francis. In this culture, social indifference, especially towards those in need, takes hold of us. Human relationships also suffer from multiple forms of disconnection, and people are isolated from each other. Sexuality is reduced to consumption, means of self-gratification. Systemic social injustice is guaranteed. Finally, this culture dominated by acquisition and consumption inevitably leads to the multiple forms of violence which we have come to experience close at hand in our own neighborhoods.

I hope that this description of the contrasting cultures of giving versus getting identifies the significance of Pope Francis' social context for evangelization. The concern about the culture of consumption and the poor is not

just an "additional concern" an issue that can be tacked on to the list of a Christian agenda, as a recent New York Times article mistakenly suggested about the recent USCCB meeting in New Orleans. The culture of acquisition and consumption is the exact counter point of the self-giving in generative and faithful love manifested on the cross of Jesus whom we proclaim and celebrate in the Eucharist.

So, what are the implications for us as priests? They are multiple, but let me just suggest a few indications. With Pope Francis, we need to discern the collective social dimension within which we serve. More often, we are better prepared and inclined to discern individual needs or, at best, those of our own parish community. Something larger, something bigger is in order. We need to be alert to the social toxins that infect the atmosphere. We need to cultivate a critical-creative mindset to address the world with the wisdom of the Cross, the power of self-giving in generative and faithful love. Once we have made these discernments and achieved this critical consciousness, we then also need to speak a clear and uncompromising word of faith that summons persons and structures conversion and renewal.

On a personal level, we need to live in contrast to the surrounding culture of consumption with a simple life style. Our evangelization must bring the Gospel to the roots of the urban violence that surrounds us in many of our cities and here in Chicago, not only in Englewood and on the West Side but also on LaSalle Street, in the suburban abortion clinics and in the substandard education that many of our children receive. The roots of violence are in a



culture of getting, and the answer can only be in giving. Ultimately, a high level Eucharistic consciousness will win the day: "This is my body given up for you, this is my blood poured out for you."

To get back to the original question, we must say that this is not Marxism. This is Christianity in its most distilled form.

**DO THE FAMOUS WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS—WHO AM I TO JUDGE?—FUNDAMENTALLY MEAN THE TRIUMPH OF MORAL RELATIVISM IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THAT NOTHING REALLY MATTERS VERY MUCH ANYMORE? EVEN PRESSING THE QUESTION MORE, CAN WE SAY THAT THE POPE HAS MADE CHRISTIANITY TOO EASY BY CONSTRUCTING SUCH A BIG TENT AND BY CONSTANTLY CALLING THE CHURCH TO BE A CHURCH OF MERCY?**

Let's begin with that famous question: "Who am I to judge?" We need to recognize here an implicit distinction that is very Ignatian and very biblical. A distinction is to be made among three movements: acceptance, approval, and judgment.

Acceptance is acceptance of the whole person prior to any partial identity: whether male or female, white or black, Hispanic or Anglo, gay or straight, holy or sinful—to use these common categories.

Everyone deserves or merits our acceptance.

A root for this claim can be found in the First Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: "Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul." Before and beyond all else, each person is created in the image and likeness of God and destined to return to the creator. We accept the person in this most fundamental and defining dimension of existence.

Permit me to cite two brief quotations from EG. The first passage describes the way that Jesus saw people: "...admire the resources the Lord used to dialogue with his people, to reveal his mystery to all and to attract ordinary people by his lofty teachings and demands. I believe that the secret lies in the way Jesus looked at people, seeing beyond their weaknesses and failings..." (n. 141) What does "seeing beyond their weaknesses and failings" mean but seeing to the core of persons and so accepting them in the very foundations of their existence? Then this startling and direct expression which stopped me in my tracks with the challenge of its implications: "...to believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God." (n. 178) I certainly profess my faith in the Incarnation, "that the Son of God assumed our human flesh," but I confess that I am still far from seeing and then accepting the full implications of that faith—"that each person has been taken up into the very heart of God." I must stay and grow in the practical consequences of my faith which mean the unreserved acceptance of all people.



approval is the second movement. When Pope Francis said, "Who am I to judge?" and when he has spoken of acceptance of the whole person, he has not denied the existence of values and standards, good and evil, a right way and a wrong way, or what can lead to God and what can lead away from God. No Pope in recent memory has spoken so often of the work and challenge of the devil, the adversary, the evil one who would pull us off track. What does all this mean? Certainly, it means that there is no blanket approval for all possible human behaviors. You cannot throw up your hands before anything that anyone decides or does and utter that contemporary shibboleth of moral acuity, "Whatever!"

It is possible to frame approval-disapproval in a moralistic do's-and-don'ts context. That would be a mistake. I would suggest that the Holy Father once again draws from the Ignatian tradition of spirituality in this question of standards and values. I return to the First Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises. Just after his description of the human person created by God and destined for God, Ignatius says: "The other things on the face of the earth [besides the human person] are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created. Hence, man is to make use of them in so as they help him in the attainment of his end, and he must rid himself of them in so far as they prove a hindrance to him." Approval and disapproval are simply consequences of the fact that what we encounter in this world can lead us to God or, alternately, lead us away from God.

And what about judgment? That is where this all began with Pope Francis' words, "Who am I to judge?" Judgment has to do with ultimate consequence, where we land. Our existence is not an endless loop. We move to a point at which our relationship with God is set and consolidated or, tragically, set and undone. Judgment is that moment that sets the consequence of our lives.

Clearly, in scripture, judgment belongs to God, for example, the Letter of James says: "There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save

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and failings..."



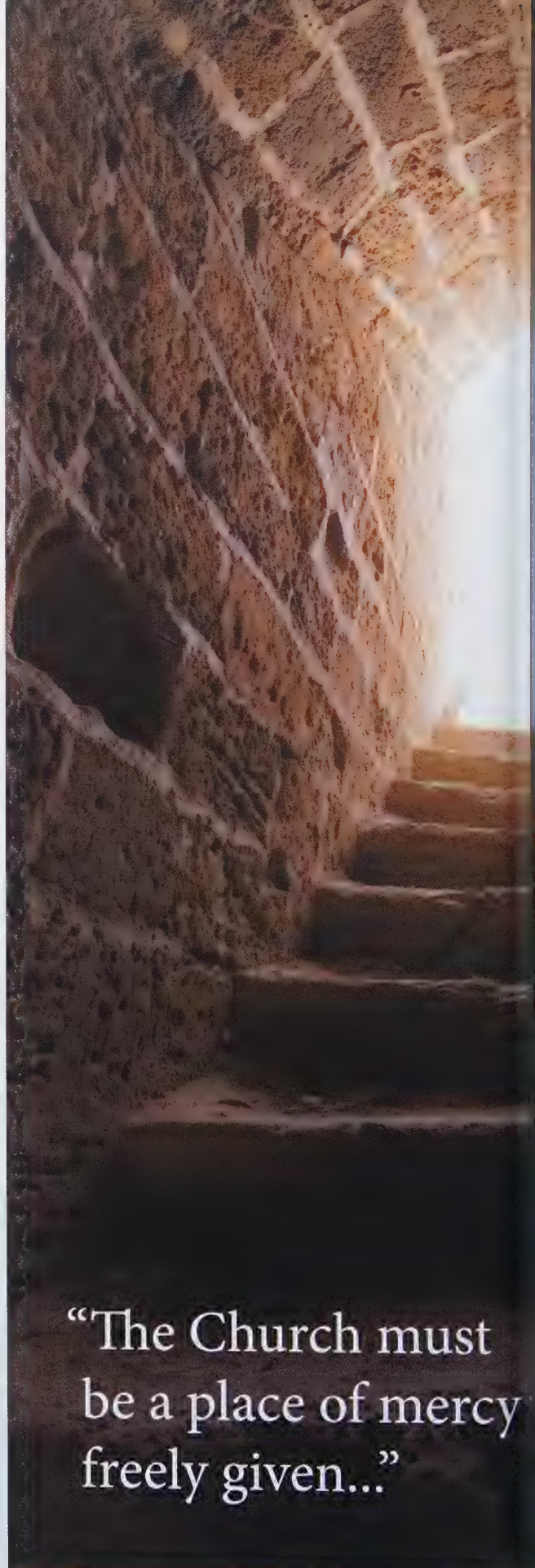
and destroy. So, who, then are you to judge your neighbor?" (4:11) And in his letter to the Romans, Paul says: "Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister?...For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God." (14:10-11)

What exactly does Pope Francis say about judgment? On December 11, 2013 in the general audience he spoke about the final judgment. He said, "...we find ourselves before a mystery that overcomes us, which we are not even able to imagine. It is a mystery that almost instinctively arouses in us a sense of fear and perhaps also trepidation. However, if we reflect well on this reality, it cannot but widen a Christian's heart..." He goes on to say that it is Christ who loves us who comes as our judge, and the saints surround us with their intercession. Then he cites a very important passage from John's gospel, Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus: "God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

These words tell us that the final judgment is already in progress. It begins now in the course of our existence. This judgment is pronounced every instant of our life, as a check on our acceptance with faith of salvation...or our incredulity with the consequent closing-in on ourselves. However, if we close ourselves to the love of Jesus, it is we ourselves who condemn ourselves. In short, the judgment of mercy, the judgment of eternal life, belongs to God. Condemnation is really our own push back from God.

So where do these movements of acceptance-approval-judgment bring us in the course of our priestly ministry? They bring us to serving and building up a church of mercy. In EG, Pope Francis says: "The Church must be a place of mercy freely given where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the gospel." (n. 114)

This mercy is much more than a slogan. It is something enacted and realized in pastoral



"The Church must be a place of mercy freely given..."





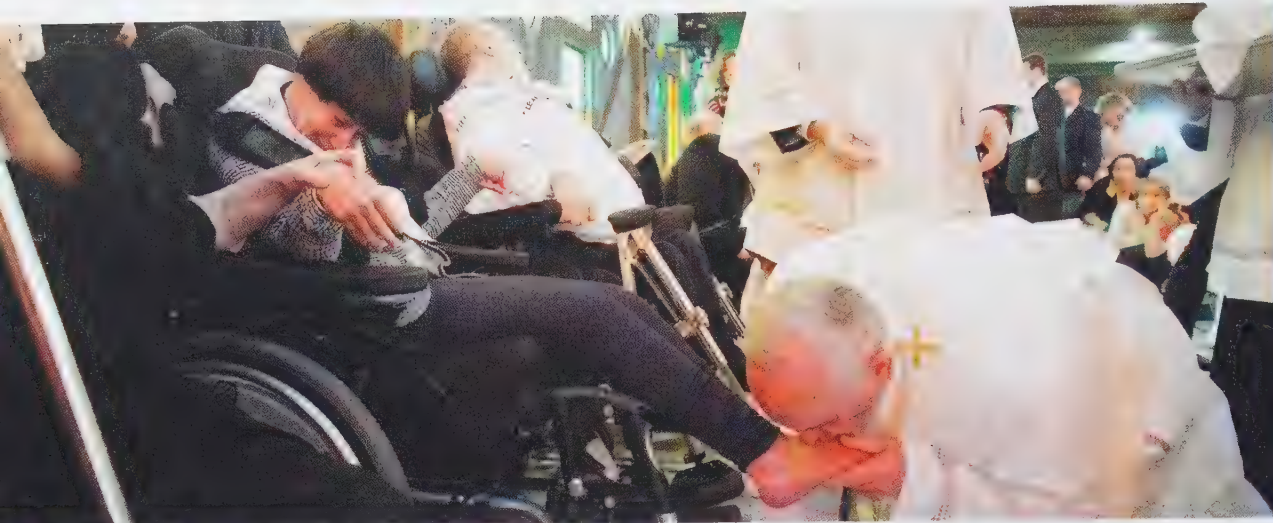
practice and in the creation of a pastoral climate. What exactly does that mean? It does not simply mean that Church leadership or those ministers who represent the Church are more kindly disposed in their dealings with people. That is a good thing in itself, but it is also insufficient. The cultivation of a Church of mercy and the creation of a merciful pastoral climate means, first of all, a rigorous catechesis and formation of all the people of God, so that they learn to see other people, all other people, as made in the image and likeness of God. And so seeing them, they fully accept them in an unqualified way. Furthermore, the Church of mercy, precisely because she is a Church of mercy, must identify what is right and good. In other words, mercy wants others to flourish, and that can only happen when they embrace what is good and reject the evil that destroys or diminishes human life. The articulation of standards, values, and directions not only for personal morality, but for social structures belongs to the Church's mission of mercy. Finally, the Church of mercy gathers people together and encourages them to surrender in confident trust to God who judges them in mercy. The ministry of sharing God's mercy, then, returns us to our starting point, the triple distinction of acceptance, approval, and judgment.

#### **WHY, AS HIS OWN PRIESTS IN THE DIOCESE OF ROME HAVE ASKED HIM, DOES THE POPE BEAT UP ON PRIESTS?**

During his Lenten meeting this past March with the priests of Rome, Pope Francis said: "It occurs to me that some of you have phoned me, written a letter, and then talked on the phone. 'But, Holy Father, what have you got against priests?' Because they were saying that I bash priests (*bastonare*). I do not wish to bash you here." When Pope Francis speaks of "bashing priests," he uses a very graphic word *bastonare*. A *bastone* is a stick or a club. You could then translate his words as "clubbing priests." This is strong language.

In fact, Pope Francis is tough on priests. He regularly—some would say, constantly—reminds them about the dangers of careerism, worldliness, and a more bureaucratic than





pastoral mindset. For example, he recently said this to a group of seminarians: “You, dear seminarians, are not preparing to engage in a profession, to become employees of a company or of a bureaucratic organization. We have so many, so many half-way priests. It is a sorrow that they do not succeed in reaching the fullness: they have something about them of employees, a bureaucratic dimension and this does no good to the Church.”

Let me follow this up with two citations from EG: “Today we are seeing in many pastoral workers an inordinate concern for their personal freedom and relaxation, which leads them to see their work as a mere appendage to their life, as if it were not a part of their very identity...” (n. 78) Then, later he writes: “In some people we see an ostentatious preoccupation with the liturgy, for doctrine, and for the Church’s prestige, but without any concern that the gospel have a real impact on God’s faithful people and the concrete needs of the present time.” (n. 95) Well, so much for Mr. Nice Guy, especially with regard to priests.

Is he tough on priests? Does he beat them up? Yes to both questions. But why? Because, as I hear him, there is no room for mediocrity. To be priests of the mercy of God there is no room for half-way measures. Priests’ commitment must be full and complete in order to love people into new life. More specifically, mediating the mercy of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, begins and

stays firmly anchored in three essential elements: compassion, connection, and closeness.

In some of his most uncompromising and challenging words to priests, Pope Francis fills out his meaning. Here is what he says: “We priests must be there, close to the people. Mercy first means treating the wounds...[It means] pastoral suffering...to suffer as a father and mother suffer for their children. To explain, I’ll put to you some questions that help me when a priest comes to me. They also help me when I am alone before the Lord! Tell me: do you weep? Or have we lost our tears?...How many of us weep before the suffering of a child, before the breakup of a family, before so many people who do not find the path? Do you weep? Or in this presbyterate have we lost all our tears?... Tell me, do you offer intercessory prayers...? Do you struggle with the Lord for your people as Abraham struggled?...Do you argue with the Lord as Moses did?”

Is he hard on priests? Absolutely. In so many ways, he is pushing us—as well we need to be pushed regularly—beyond a functional approach to ministry, beyond contentment with getting the job done. For beyond the doing is the relationship in love that matters when all is said and done. To be the minister of God’s mercy is utterly demanding, even as it is completely exhilarating.

Now, there is another very important challenge

“We priests must be there, close to the people. Mercy first means treating the wounds... pastoral suffering...to suffer as a father and mother suffer for their children.”

What Pope Francis is issuing to priests, especially diocesan priests. This challenge is not explicit, but its ramifications are very significant. The particular challenge for diocesan priests stems from the very first chapter of EG and its title “The Church’s Missionary Transformation.”

Only a Church, the Pope says, that goes out and takes initiative stays faithful to the Lord’s missionary mandate. The missionary style of the Church stands in sharp contrast to a Church that can be introverted and preoccupied about its own internal structures and institutional life. Here are two quotations from EG to illustrate my point: “...missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity. Along these lines the Latin American bishops stated that we cannot passively and calmly wait in our church buildings; we need to move ‘from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry.’” (n. 15) And then: “Mere administration can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be ‘permanently in state of mission.’” (n. 25)

Does that sound good? Yes, it does, and I’m sure that we can all nod in agreement. But there is a catch and a tension that lands on the doorstep of diocesan priests. And this means another challenge for us.

Let’s take a look at the life of the early Church—for example, as it was presented to us in the Acts of the Apostles—there are two movements occurring, both led and inspired by the Holy

Spirit. First, there is the missionary outreach which is so immediately evident. But there is another movement as well. Once the word is accepted and people are baptized, there is a movement to establish stable communities with their own leadership. Paul, for example, regularly makes provision for stable local leadership as he continues his missionary journeys. This is a process of institutionalization, and it is also a work of the Holy Spirit.

So, when Pope Francis says that we must be a missionary church, I agree wholeheartedly. And there is plenty of mission work to be done right here. At the same time, it would be irresponsible for me, as a diocesan priest with a specific geographical commitment and a commitment to a given population of people, not to attend to the institutional life of the stable communities entrusted to my care. “Mere administration,” he says, “can no longer be enough.” But no administration and no attention to organizational detail would also not be true to our vocation as diocesan priests. With his Ignatian formation as a religious committed to a wide-ranging apostolic mission, Pope Francis naturally and appropriately calls us to be a Church in mission. We diocesan priests who stay in this place and stay with this people also need to figure out what that specifically means for our priestly ministry. I do not have an answer, but I am convinced that this is a reflection and conversation that we very much need to have.



## HOW CAN I REPLICATE THE FRANCIS EFFECT IN MY PARISH, SO THAT EVERYONE WILL LOVE ME?

Two things need to be said at the outset. First, I don't think any one of us can entirely replicate the Francis effect. He has a particular gift, and—as I have come to understand it—God has raised him up, as God has raised up other men and women in our Church across the centuries, for a particular purpose. On the other hand, God also endows each of us with our own particular gifts as well. The second thing to note is that the Francis effect does not result from the application of a few strategic techniques—kissing babies, embracing the disabled, patting dogs on the head, smiling, and assuming a generally non-assuming attitude—although, indeed, he has done all of this. The Francis effect comes from something deeper than relational techniques.

One key to the Francis effect that we priests ought to pay attention to is an important section of EG (nn. 145-159) that we might overlook. It is about preaching.

As I watch and listen to Pope Francis, I see people drawn to him and his message because of his heart to heart communication. This is the *cor ad cor loquitur* of John Henry Newman's motto. I mean that it is not only his directions for evangelical preaching in EG but how he actually preaches, that tells us how he has an effect on people. By extension, when we preach in a similar way, we can have a similar effect on our people. When, for example, he preaches at morning Mass at the Casa Santa Marta or at one of the grand celebrations in St. Peter's square or when he speaks at the Wednesday general audience, he seems to say: "I love you and want to give you what I have discovered in God's life-giving word of mercy."

He begins with closeness or with what we can call "pastoral intimacy." In EG, he says: "To be evangelizers of souls, we need to develop a

spiritual taste for being close to people's lives and to discover that this is itself a source of greater joy. Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people... We realize that he wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people. He takes us from the midst of his people and he sends us to his people; without this sense of belonging we cannot understand our deepest identity." (n. 268)

When Pope Francis speaks and preaches, I sense that he is standing alongside of us. I sense that we are listening to God's word together with him and jointly recovering the power of God's calling us into new life. Even more than in his prescriptions for preaching, it is in the very act of doing this, in *actu exercito*, that he is telling us to do this with our own people.

In fact, in offering us this pattern of moving closely with our people, Pope Francis is not giving us anything original. The pattern was already set in Jesus Christ. God could have saved us from "on high." In fact, God sent his only-begotten Son to be one with us. Jesus served in solidarity with the ones he served, in the closeness that belongs to Emmanuel, the Word made flesh. And here we return to where we began—the great mystery of the conjunction of humanity and divinity. It is not about a Francis effect, as the Pope himself would be quick to acknowledge. It is the way of Jesus Christ who marks out our path of service as priests and joyful evangelizers.

We do not encounter a lot of complications in embracing a priesthood well lived. It is fundamentally a simple thing to serve and live well as a priest, as the words and gestures of Pope Francis are telling us. It is a matter of staying close to the one in whose name and person we stand and act, Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church, and staying close to those whom we serve.







PERHAPS I CAN SUMMARIZE ALL THIS WITH SIX APPEALS THAT POPE FRANCIS MIGHT MAKE TO US, APPEALS THAT CAN LEAD US ON A PATH OF RENEWAL:

1. BE COMPLETELY HUMAN AND, AT THE SAME TIME, GIVE CONSISTENT WITNESS TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THIS WORLD.
2. RESIST THE CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION BY LIVING SIMPLY AND BEING CLOSE TO THE POOR.
3. EMBRACE JESUS' PATH OF SELF-GIVING AND SO CONCENTRATE ON ESSENTIALS.
4. SEE OTHER PEOPLE WITH THE EYES OF JESUS AND SO BE MERCIFUL.

5. AS GOOD MISSIONARIES, BE READY TO MOVE AND TO CHANGE, EVEN AS YOU CARE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ALREADY YOURS.

6. HOLD ON TO THE JOY, HOPE, AND CONFIDENCE THAT BELONG TO THOSE WHO KNOW JESUS AND LIVE IN HIS HOLY SPIRIT.

I believe if we act and believe as Pope Francis implores us to this might give all whether priest, religious, lay, Catholic and non-Catholic, a reason to live a new life, indeed a committed life that is well-lived.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Father Louis J. Cameli** is a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago. He holds a doctorate in theology with a specialization in spirituality from the Gregorian University in Rome. He has taught, written books and articles, and served as a spiritual direction and pastor.



Clearly Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* is an articulation of the inner workings of a deep spirituality of care and compassion. Both the witness of the man and the testimony

of his words attest to the humility and wisdom of one who has walked side by side and hand in hand with those who are disenfranchised, poor and perhaps altogether forgotten by so many of us.

In my ministry directed toward transforming the way we care for those who are severely and persistently mentally ill, my colleagues and I daily confront attitudes of disdain, fear and rejection that often reside covertly in a society that would prefer to isolate and forget such tormented individuals. Francis has emboldened us—leaders and frontline workers alike—in our commitment to speak out against the injustices we see and to confront the systems that continue to marginalize the mentally ill. In many ways, we are faced with needing to confront those who have identified these human beings as “contemporary lepers” to be banned from our hospitals altogether or deprived of humane care in respectful clinical environments.

I am fortunate to work for a health system that has made a different choice. Mercy Health of Ohio and Kentucky took a countercultural stance to put talent and financial resources behind trying to do what is right for this marginalized population. As our Boards and

system leaders continue to reflect on the words of Francis and on *Evangelii Gaudium*, we find ourselves supported and inspired by this holy man who is obviously not fearful of moving beyond the mainstream to live at the heart of the Gospel.

For those who have not yet read *Evangelii Gaudium*, Louis Cameli provides a good interpretation of the document. His insights

“we find ourselves supported and inspired by this holy man”

are particularly relevant for those in priestly ministry. Perhaps most importantly, the reader is invited through this article to reflect upon the manner in which he or she is also called to transmit the compassion and mercy of Jesus in everyday life.

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# IN MY OPINION



I am most grateful to Fr. Cameli for his article. He raises a couple important questions with which we should wrestle: what is Pope Francis' vision for the ordained priesthood in the life of the

Church and what impact should his teaching have on the initial and ongoing formation of priests?

In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), Pope Francis extensively treats "pastoral workers" or "agents of evangelization." In one salient passage, he writes: "One can observe in many agents of evangelization, even though they pray, a heightened individualism, a crisis of identity and a cooling of fervor. These are three evils which fuel one another" (EG, 78). Perhaps it might be good to look at each of these, specifically in the lives of priests and seminarians.

A heightened individualism. Priests and seminarians are not immune from the culture in which we live. We are tempted to live life and see faith individualistically. The Holy Father describes such a faith as subjective where a person is "imprisoned in his or her thoughts and feelings" (EG, 94). One way this manifests itself is when a priest or seminarian succumbs to ideological thinking or has "an agenda." This is a temptation of both the left and the right—a manipulation of the Gospel to suit one's particular outlook. The Pope is deeply concerned when faith becomes an ideology.

So what's the answer to this? Simply to become more deeply a man of the Church—to develop the habit of "thinking with the Church." This means not only thinking with the hierarchy but being part of the people of God, pastors and people together. Our people want companions on their journeys. It is a theme the Holy Father returns to again and again. In a talk to priests last March, he said: "In the image of the Good Shepherd, the priest is a man of mercy and compassion, close to his people, and the servant of all.... This is a pastoral criterion I want to emphasize, closeness, closeness." It is a very Catholic intuition. Belonging to the Body of Christ, if fully embraced, is the most important counterbalance to a heightened individualism in the priesthood. For Pope Francis, it is difficult, if not impossible, to be ideological if one has given oneself to the entire Church.

A crisis of identity. The Holy Father also is concerned about an "insidious worldliness" that can take over in the Church. This can take many forms: "an ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for doctrine and for the Church's prestige" which is divorced from a deeper concern for the Gospel; "a fascination with social or political gain"; a "business mentality" which is overly "caught up in management, statistics, plans and evaluations whose principal beneficiary is not God's people but the Church as an institution" (EG, 95). The problem, of course, is to reduce the Church from sacrament and mystery to a purely human institution that is concerned with efficiency and results based on our own efforts. In Pope Francis' own provocative words, it is "self-absorbed promethean neopelagianism" (EG, 94) at its very worst.

This unhealthy ecclesiology leads, of course, to an unhealthy view of priesthood. Here are the roots of clericalism: a mindset overly concerned

about titles, power and clerical status. Rather than leadership by accompaniment, clericalism promotes a separation from people and leadership by dictate.

What is the antidote? For Pope Francis, it comes back to re-identifying oneself with Christ the servant. This is done primarily through prayer: without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervor dies out” (EG, 262). Like a true Jesuit, Francis calls priests and seminarians to a recovery of a contemplative spirit which roots us in the ultimate reality.

A cooling of fervor. The Holy Father senses the presence of a “gray pragmatism” in the hearts of some based on disillusionment with the world, the Church, and themselves. This “tomb psychology” has a profoundly chilling effect on evangelical zeal and leads to melancholy and a lack of hope. In time, this can develop into a deep pessimism and even cynicism. (Here, he particularly warns against “pastoral acedia”—the noon-day demon—which can especially rear its head in mid-life.) Pope Francis is deeply concerned about this dynamic; in his mind, it is “the biggest threat of all” (EG, 83).

The Pope proposes another and much more life-giving approach. He challenges priests to return to our first love and to remember the first proclamation of the saving love of God in Jesus Christ. He reminds us that the only answer to infinite sadness is infinite love. He exhorts us to ask the Lord to open up those areas of our hearts that have become cold or lukewarm. He provocatively asks: “Are we still a Church

capable of warming hearts?” In the end, his challenge to priests is all about evangelization. Unless our love is rekindled and burning brightly, we cannot hope to be the instruments, the sacraments Christ has called us to be.

Fr. Cameli quotes from St. John Paul II’s *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 43: “the priest should mold his human personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ...” Famously, this leads to a discussion of the priest as a “man of communion.”

## Priests and seminarians are not immune from the culture in which we live.

This is a question of human formation. Each priest—and certainly each seminarian being formed to become a priest—must continually be challenged to become bridges of God’s grace and men of communion. Pope Francis is doing precisely that in his papacy by his words and actions. It is important that we engage in the discernment the Holy Father asks for in our presbyterates, in our support groups, in spiritual direction, and in our seminaries.

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# PRAYER FOR HOPE

An Act of Confidence of God -St. Claude de la Colombiere, S.J.

**M**y God, I am so convinced that You keep watch over those who hope in You, and that we can want for nothing when we look for all from You, that I am resolved in the future to live free from every care, and to turn all my anxieties over to You.

Men may deprive me of possessions and of honor; sickness may strip me of strength and the means of serving You; I may even lose Your grace by sin; but I shall never lose my hope. I shall keep it until the last moment of my life; and at that moment all the demons in Hell shall strive to tear it from me in vain.

Others may look for happiness from their wealth or their talents; others may rest on the innocence of their life, or the severity of their penance, or that amount of their alms, or the fervor of their prayers. You, O Lord, have singularly settled me in hope. As for me, Lord, all my confidence is my confidence in Yourself. This confidence has never deceived anyone. No one, no one has hoped in You and has been confounded. I am sure, therefore, that I shall be eternally happy, since I firmly hope to be, and because

it is from you, O God, that I hope for it. I know, alas I know only too well, that I am weak and unstable. I know what temptation can do against the strongest virtue. I have seen the stars of heaven fall, and the pillars of the firmament; but that cannot frighten me. So long as I continue to hope, I shall be sheltered from all misfortune; and I am sure of hoping always, since I hope also for this unwavering hopefulness.

Finally, I am sure that I cannot hope too much in You, and that I cannot receive less than I have hoped for from You. So I hope that You will hold me safe on the steepest slopes, that You will sustain me against the most furious assaults, and that You will make my weakness triumph over my most fearful enemies. I hope that You will love me always, and that I too shall love You without ceasing. To carry my hope once and for all as far as it can go, I hope from You to possess You, O my Creator, in time and in eternity.

*Amen.*





# A JOURNEY AND WITNESS TO HOPE

Charles Kohlerman, C.S.C.





*Editors' Note: A longer version of this article was a keynote address at the Guest House Summer Leadership Conference held in Naperville, Illinois in July, 2014. Following it is a Commentary on its implications for leadership and ministry, particularly for fostering personal and spiritual transformation.*

I was born in Wilmington, DE on June 5, 1935, the second child in a family of three children. I had an older sister who died as the result of a very tragic event involving alcohol in August, 2003, and a younger brother who also has had major struggles with alcohol. My father was a chemist, first with DuPont Corporation in Delaware and ultimately, with a small rayon company in Painesville, Ohio. My mother was a registered nurse from Fairport Harbor, Ohio, a small town 25 miles Northeast of Cleveland.

My mother was a nurse and was sickly during much of her life. She appeared to live in the shadow of my father. She was a loving mother, fun to be around most of the time, but could be very moody and seemed to exhibit various degrees of hypochondria. She died at age 69 apparently from a misdiagnosis in the hospital. Her death pushed my father more deeply into himself. He began living with a deep sense of guilt about his life with my mother and pretty much shut his children out. My mother was also apparently addicted to prescription drugs, notably "valium."

I grew up in Painesville OH, We lived just about a block from the church and school and I attended St Mary's Catholic grade school, grades 1 through 8 in Painesville. Our family life was very much centered on the parish and the activities of the parish. I was very close to the priests in the parish and they probably were the ones that most nurtured my vocation other than my parents and the sisters at the school.

I don't know that I can really relate to any early influence of alcohol in my life as drinking in my family at home was infrequent. I have recollections of my father being under the influence coming home from Christmas parties and the like but not on a daily basis. His drinking caused problems within the family, most notably in his



relationship with us children and my mother. We did not have a car in the family until I was 16, so there was not much traveling around to parties. I suspect that my father was a “dry drunk” - a suspicion based on his behavior toward my mother and us children. As noted above my mother struggled and most likely was addicted to prescription drugs, which became a major factor in my life of addiction as she was my sometime supplier of “valium”.

I have no recollections of any early oaths/promises not to drink and really don't recall that alcohol impressed me one way or another early in life. When we were children, my mother would sometimes let us taste a very small amount of wine on Thanksgiving and Christmas and I seem to recall that I liked the taste, but my struggles with alcohol came much later in life after I was ordained. That I didn't have issues with alcohol earlier might be due to the fact that alcohol was not allowed in any of our formation houses right up to ordination to the priesthood.

I began my journey in religious life and the priesthood when I came to Holy Cross High School Seminary at Notre Dame in August, 1949 at the age of 14. During my time in the philosophy seminary at Notre Dame, my superior began to suspect that there was something about me that troubled him, but he couldn't put his finger on exactly what. He was going to delay my taking final vows in the community in 1957 but I convinced him that all was well. In our talks he simply expressed uneasiness about me but could not offer any concrete examples or suggestions for change so nothing was done and I pronounced my final vows.

When I went to our theology seminary in 1958, I began what was a very rough road in formation. I was not drinking, and the consumption of alcohol was not a part of my life in any way. I don't remember wanting to drink and certainly was not suffering from any apparent obsession for alcohol. Alcohol was not available in the seminary during these many years, and I probably only had a handful of drinks outside the seminary. I was ordained in June of 1963.

Today, I suspect that what superiors saw in me were indications of alcoholic behavior that would be full blown in a few years of ministry. In reflecting back on these years, particularly as they might impact my work with our seminarians today, I can only surmise that in the late 1950's and 1960's we were very uncomfortable dealing with issues such as alcoholic behavior and possibly could not identify it especially in the absence of any real drinking patterns. Such problems often seemed to be “swept under the rug.” As I would later discover in my Recovery Journey, alcoholic priests were/are sometimes sheltered from interventions and consequences with the misguided idea that priests were above such issues. In my recent years as a superior in my community, I have truly learned how difficult and sometimes overwhelming such confrontations are. However, I have also learned that they can never be overlooked or set aside out of a misguided sense of love, fraternal charity, forgiveness, or any other reason. Also, I have learned both through my own journey and working with others that interventions without serious consequences are futile.

My first assignment was to Notre Dame High School for Boys in Niles, IL. As I mentioned above, I was denied ordination at the end of my theology training and was sent to teach in an all boys' high school in one of the Chicago suburbs. Teaching in a high school had never been on my radar screen during my years of formation as I wanted to get my PhD in Physics, get tenured at Notre Dame, and teach at the University for the rest of my life. Being assigned to the high school was a notable disappointment, but one that I figured I could change quickly. I still had no real sense of what was going on; why I was being held back. I seemed to be isolated in a shroud of silence. I started teaching religion and physics and by the end of three years I had been named the Assistant Principal and Business Manager. I had attempted to jump-start my university physics career by further studies but to no avail. I also learned that I was not gifted for such a career. As I mentioned above, I was ordained to the priesthood in June of 1963 with the support of the religious community of the high school.



part of my new duties included the role of development director for the school and hosting prospective donors and benefactors. It was during this time that the drinking began. I had a "wet bar" in my office area for "entertaining" and found that after a while I was the most frequent patron. I also discovered what I perceived as the "clerical culture of drinking" - the central role that alcohol seemed to play in the lives of priests, the happy hours before dinner and late night drinking sessions that often appeared to be a feature of clerical gatherings. What I didn't realize at that time was that the majority of religious and priests did not / do not find that these gatherings pose any real problem for them. For those of us who are predisposed to alcoholism, these events become a daily reward and sooner or later become a deadly obsession.

After four years as Assistant Principal I was elected Principal of the high school in 1969 in the midst of some tragic turmoil. We proceeded to have an election for a new Principal, and by a small margin I was elected Principal and for whatever reason my drinking really took off. I cannot say whether the conditions, stresses and circumstances of the job influenced my drinking, but my drinking certainly had a major negative impact on my job as Principal and led to my dismissal from that position two years later.

My struggle with drinking really surfaced in my years as Assistant Principal and became full blown in my two years as Principal. I would often find myself, in full religious habit, waking up on the couch in my office fully drunk. My drinking was mostly in private as I seemed to have a sense that I needed to not be seen drunk at my official duties. Needless to say, as time went on, my official duties became almost totally neglected and my drinking increased.

Toward the end of my second year as Principal, in 1971, I was summoned down to our Provincial House in South Bend, Indiana and told that I could no longer continue as Principal of the high school. When I asked "why not," I was given no explanation of any kind. At this stage of my life I was becoming acutely aware that I had a problem, but found that I was totally unable to figure out what to do. Yes, I knew that

"...my superior began to suspect that there was something about me that troubled him, but he couldn't put his finger on exactly what."





I was drinking, apparently uncontrollably, but since there were no apparent consequences, what then? My dismissal as Principal of the high school didn't seem to have any deterrent effect on me and my behavior. I would have to characterize my response to my dismissal as more bewilderment than anger. I also was confronted with the reality that no one appeared to be willing to take me aside and point out my issues and the consequences of my behavior, as if my uncontrolled drinking was someone else's problem. Some sixteen years later, in 1987, with much help and painful soul searching, I gradually learned how to figure it out. My problem was called alcoholism. I was then, and am now, totally responsible for my actions during my active alcoholism.

The episode of my dismissal as Principal has given me many great insights into the potential damage that we can do to those with apparent problems with alcohol if we either ignore the issue or dismiss or enable the person. I also do not judge my superiors for the actions that they took or did not take in my case. At the time of my dismissal as Principal, alcoholism was a very sensitive and little understood area among religious and priests. My community of Holy Cross did not promulgate a policy on alcoholism until 1973. I also discovered the reality that within religious and clerical life, there is the danger of living a type of "anonymity" which allows us to conceal our drinking and other addictions for long periods of time. It is a time when we live behind "masks" not daring to show our true selves. It is diametrically opposite the "anonymity" found in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous where its purpose "is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding



us to place principles before personalities."

After my dismissal as Principal, the high school really did not want me around so the mayor of the town where the high school is located asked me to work for him as an Assistant Manager and Finance Director of the village, assisting in running the village and taking care of the finances and computer operations. When I asked permission of the Provincial Superior, he agreed that I could work for the village for one year. I am sure that he didn't know what to do with me. The high school did not want me to live there, so another priest moved with me to an apartment and I started working with the village still attempting to continue my priestly duties, whatever they were at this time.

Drinking really went into high gear. The priest, with whom I shared the apartment, and I seldom saw each other as he continued to work and teach at the high school. I spent my days with the village. A definite drinking pattern emerged. I was fortunate enough, or so I thought, that I could drink at night and still make it to work in the morning. My pattern became coming home a little after five in the afternoon and drinking until I passed out. Then later, I would wake up and make some "hamburger helper" dish that I had thawed out during the day. It is a wonder that I didn't burn the place down!

My life centered on the bottle and my next drink. In my early drinking I considered myself rather sophisticated, but as time went on it was nothing but straight scotch or whatever was available and the brand name was irrelevant. I found myself looking for and finding many different liquor stores so the clerks would not



## ...alcoholic priests were/are sometimes sheltered from interventions and consequences ...”

detect that I had a problem. I have since learned that the people at the liquor stores were much more savvy than I thought.

After a year of living in the apartment, the religious community at the high school relented, not really knowing how bad my drinking had become, and invited me to move back with them. I did so. I continued to work for the village and lived at the high school. My drinking increased and my pattern was to go to work, come home around 5 and begin the drinking until I passed out. When I finally awoke I would attempt to go to the kitchen and make something to eat.

During the next 7 years, I continued this existence, sometimes being challenged by my superiors for a possible drinking problem, totaling a “village owned” car after a blackout and being taken home to sleep it off by the local police, no ticket for DUI being issued. For whatever reason, I seemed to find myself the object of well-intentioned but totally misguided caretaking and enabling. I am not sure that, by this time, I had any sense or idea of what was going on in my life or who I was.

In 1979, some 14 years into my drinking career, one of my superiors challenged me and in my arrogant belligerent way I told him I did not have a drinking problem and I would prove it. This was just before Ash Wednesday of that year and on Ash Wednesday I stopped drinking. From that time until I went into Guest House in March of 1987, I religiously used only a couple of drops (literally) of wine for mass and no other drinking. There was however, another wrinkle. I had gone to my doctor a little before

this, complaining of tension, stress, etc. and he prescribed “valium” for this “overworked, stressed out” priest. I had found my “dry alcohol” with no hangovers in the morning and a sympathetic doctor and pharmacist. For the next eight years I used and abused valium. Unfortunately, as I mentioned previously, my mother was sickly most of her adult life and she became addicted to prescription drugs, most notably “valium.” She became a sometime supplier of valium for me.

I worked for the village for a total of 13 years and was then asked to return to the high school as Associate Principal handling all of the business and operational affairs of the school. I accepted the invitation as I seemed to be wearing out my welcome working for the village due to my increased issues with alcohol. During the next three years following my return to the high school, there were three Principals at the school, some having issues with alcohol. My work there deteriorated as the alcoholic behavior continued, now under the influence of valium not alcohol.

The last of the three Principals appointed had some experience with addictions and alcohol as did the Provincial Superior and I had an intervention. My defense was that I had not had a drink in eight years. The response of the Provincial Superior was that he knew that I was not drinking but was convinced that I was an alcoholic and needed to go to Guest House. I remember storming out of the room and driving off in a rage. However in a short time I seemed to be overcome by a sense of peace that I had never known before. I returned to the high school. The next morning I went to see the Provincial Superior who was still there and told



him I was ready to go to Guest House and went to Guest House on Sunday, March 15, 1987. The date of the intervention was Friday, March 13, 1987. I have always seen Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup> as a very special day.

Shortly after arriving at Guest House I took the battery of tests to determine whether or not I was an alcoholic. They were “inconclusive” but the staff assured me that I belonged there, that I was indeed an alcoholic. My mission became “proving them wrong, proving that I was not an alcoholic.” I even remember going to an AA meeting in Pontiac MI and stating with total resolve, “I am Charlie and I am here to prove I am not an alcoholic.” There was an old-timer there who was quite amused by my assertion and he simply replied, “Keep coming back Charlie, Keep coming back. One of these days you’ll get it.” It took over a month but the time came when I could say, “I am Charlie and I am an alcoholic.”

Everything up to this time was a journey of detours, pitfalls, false promises, and wanderings that ended up in self-destructive behavior hurting others and myself. I was ordained almost 25 years before I really made a final commitment in fully and unconditionally answering His call to the priesthood.

When I left treatment at Guest House in Lake Orion, MI in June of 1987, my future was undefined and questionable. I was assigned to live and work at Fatima Retreat Center, then, our Holy Cross retreat center at Notre Dame. Now it is a religious house for Independent Living for brothers and priests, where I am privileged to be the superior.

I had never done retreat work before but found an instant liking to it and began to feel that, at last, I had found my true ministerial calling as a priest and religious in the Congregation of Holy Cross. I had no real difficulty in preparing retreats and writing conferences, and found that my new life in AA had opened my eyes to my calling as a religious and priest and gave me an ability to deal with people, compassionately and with a degree of patience that I had never known before. The gospel story of the “Prodigal Son” became my central theme in retreats and Henri Nouwen’s book *The Return of the Prodigal Son* became my guide especially in his references to Rembrandt’s great painting “the Return of the Prodigal Son.” I saw the signposts for my journey to Recovery in the younger and elder sons, and especially in the father. I settled in for what would be a 12-year assignment working at the retreat center and going out doing 12-step retreats and giving parish missions. My hope was to stay at the retreat center permanently. I had even asked for the job as Director of the center when that position became open, but was not given that opportunity.

After 12 years at Fatima Retreat Center I was asked to take the job of Assistant Steward / Treasurer of our Province and to live at Moreau Seminary, our major seminary on the Notre Dame campus working on the formation staff as a chaplain to the seminarians. I enjoy working with the seminarians and found myself challenged by them to be a mentor in living the religious and priestly life. Working with formation issues causes me to look more deeply at my own life which is now firmly rooted in





the 12 steps of AA, not as part of my life, but as my true lifestyle. With the insights and graces of my recovery journey, I am learning that over the years the formation of those preparing for religious life and priesthood has become a more disciplined, professional enterprise.

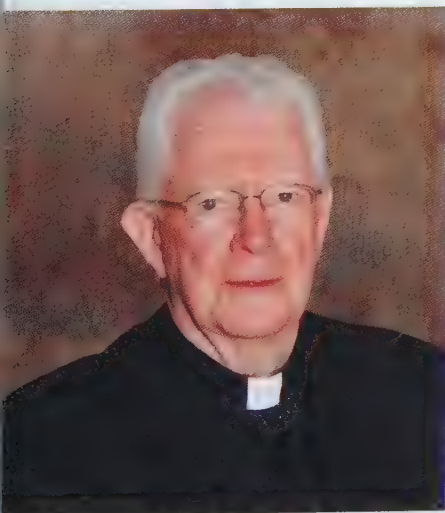
In addition to rigorous academic standards that are now being applied, the use and understanding of psychological assessment tools is also a vital component in both vocations and formation. The number of men entering in need of supplemental assistance to deal with family issues, sexual integration issues, and psychological/learning issues is increasing. In so many ways this is an area where I can share as a "wounded healer," one who is walking the walk. In our 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous we have a set of "Promises" one of which says "We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it." We are totally accountable for our actions while drinking but we also have learned the consequences of our actions and can share them with others in the hope of helping them to learn and avoid the pitfalls that we experienced -- and will again experience if we go back to our former ways.

It is difficult to fathom the spiritual growth that I have been gifted with in, and since, treatment.

I went into treatment a totally self-centered, arrogant, defiant religious and priest who had pretty much abandoned God since God had abandoned me, or so I thought. I did priestly things for show but inside was a vast cavern of self-loathing, meaningless emptiness where God was not welcome.

Since my entrance into the A.A. program, all of the ministries that I have been asked to undertake have been great challenges prompting me to constantly reflect on my relationship with God and others, and to accept my limitations and those of others. I have become friends with Jesus and Mary and am attempting to walk with them so I can share their journey with others, trying to turn gifts of suffering into gifts of love for others as Jesus did on the cross and as Mary did as she walked with him. Treatment reintroduced me to a spiritual life that I thought I had lost, and I am nurtured by the program each day to walk this spiritual path in such a way that I can grow in my relationship with God and others.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### Charles Kohlerman

Rev. Charles Kohlerman is the Religious Superior of Our Lady of Fatima House, a Religious House for Independent Living for the Brothers and Priests of the United States Province of Holy Cross and continues to be the chaplain for the seminarians.



# ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS ALWAYS IMPACT PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D.



The testimony of Rev. Charles Kohlerman, C.S.C. is powerful, inspiring, and insightful. It can be read and appreciated as a powerful, and inspiring message of recovery and hope. But, for readers of Human Development, particularly those who

are in pastoral leadership and formation, it can also be read as an insightful and telling account of how organizational dynamics influenced one priest's experience of addiction and his eventual recovery. The testimony provides a first-hand portrayal of the process of recovery, including spiritual awakening and personal and spiritual transformation. It also portrays how policies and leadership decisions, particularly about ministry assignments and living arrangements influenced such transformation. This commentary briefly focuses on the implications of these various factor for pastoral leadership and formation.

## SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Step 12 of Alcoholics Anonymous reads: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs." That Father Charles regularly gives his testimony and continues in recovery reflects this step. So what exactly is spiritual awakening and what are its implications for pastoral leadership? Since this term is often used synonymously with spiritual experience, it bears clarification. Spiritual awakening involves a transformation of personality which is reflected in a new way of thinking and acting. The experience of spiritual awakening is often preceded by a conflict or 'hitting bottom' and is often followed by feelings peace and harmony, a

loss of cravings, and abstinence. This experience can be sufficiently life changing that it results in complete recovery from addiction, although it is typically a gradual transformation that can take days, weeks, or longer. It has been likened to religious conversion, since both involve a major transformation in personality and a change in behavior in line with a particular set of beliefs.

This experience is evident in Father Charles' account. He describes how one of his high school principals and his provincial superior engaged him in an Intervention. His defense was that he had been abstinent for eight years. But, his superior was convinced that he was an alcoholic and wanted him sent for treatment. Father Charles reports storming out of the room and driving off in a rage. "However, in a short time I seemed to be overcome by a sense of peace that I had never known before." He then enters treatment, and despite some initial denial of his addiction, the process of recovery and a deep level of personal and spiritual transformation began. It is important to note that his spiritual awakening was triggered by a superior in the context of his congregation's organizational dynamics.

## PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Personal transformation refers to a profound change in one's basic personality. Such a change often accompanies spiritual transformation. Spiritual transformation refers to a profound change in the character and relationship of the sacred in the life of an individual. In Christianity this means a change in one's relationship to God. Father Charles points to both transformations in his testimony: "It is difficult to fathom the spiritual growth that I have been gifted within and since treatment. I went into treatment a totally self-centered, arrogant, defiant religious and priest who had pretty much abandoned



God since God had abandoned me, or so I thought. I did priestly things for show but inside was a vast cavern of self-loathing, meaningless emptiness where God was not welcome.” What ensued was a positive relationship to God and a totally new perspective on his priesthood. What accounts for such transformations and how did they occur? Obviously, the influence of the Holy Spirit is evident in these changes within the context of the organizational dynamics of Father Charles’ congregation and his ministry assignments and living arrangements.

## ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS AND PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

What are these organizational dynamics and how did they impact the expression of Father Charles’ addiction and subsequent recovery resulting in his personal and spiritual transformation? While there are several elements of organizational dynamics, this commentary focuses on three noted in Father Charles’ testimony.

## POLICIES

A policy is a principle or protocol to guide decisions that organizations and their leaders use to achieve the organization’s mission. Effective organizations, whether religious or for-profit enterprises, need effective policies that are effectively implemented. It is noteworthy that Father Charles’ congregation had no policy on alcoholism until 1973, which was well after his addictive behaviors and their negative consequences were first manifested. He also mentions another policy of his order: alcohol was not allowed in formation. That policy unwittingly put novices and seminarians, as well as superiors, at a disadvantage. While such prohibition might appear laudatory, it effectively eliminated the opportunity for young men to learn to use alcohol in a healthy manner. It

also limited superiors from observing drinking and socialization patterns and proactively intervening.

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be it a province or  
diocese, personal and  
spiritual transformation  
is always impacted—  
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organizational dynamics.**

For example, early in his training he notes that one of his superiors had a vague sense that something was not right with him, but could not provide him with specifics. As a result that superior wanted to deny final vows. Presumably, the superior had some awareness of the self-centeredness, arrogance, and defiance--Father Charles’ characterization of his personality dynamics. Later he describes this characterization as his ‘dry drunk.’ Since the influence of alcohol can amplify such personal characteristics, superiors might have been able to discuss their concerns more directly and specifically with him. Later, another superior apparently had similar concerns and actually postponed Father Charles’ ordination.

## MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Effective religious leaders tend to make ministry assignments that are a good fit for both the



ministry and the minister. Less effective leaders tend to use other criteria which eventually result in problems. For Father Charles, it appears that a number of his early assignments were largely operative in the expression of his addiction, which heretofore had not been expressed. For example, he was initially assigned to various roles in one of the order's high schools which seemed to have enabled his out-of-control drinking. Then, he was forced to leave the assignment, but then later asked to return. Yet, he reports that there were no consequences for his addictive behaviors. That is, until several years later when the Intervention with his principal and provincial superior occurred and he experienced a spiritual awakening and entered treatment. Even later, when he was well into his recovery, it seems that more effective leaders gave him assignments that were a better fit for him. These included the retreat house position where his recovery was greatly facilitated, and then his current assignment as seminary chaplain where his transformation continues.

### LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Besides making appropriate ministry assignments, a further challenge for religious leaders is to assign living arrangements that foster an environment conducive to personal and spiritual transformation. Effective leaders are able to strike a reasonable balance between

support and accountability, and between the need of communal participation and for privacy. However, for too many religious and priests, there is imbalance that favors privacy, anonymity, and disengagement over engagement and connectedness. Anonymity and lack of engagement in community life too often leads to isolation and a lack of both social engagement and close intimate relationships. Recent research confirms the clinical observation that loneliness is both increasing and destructive. Loneliness is clearly linked to depression, increased chronic medical conditions, shortened life span, and even limited ministry effectiveness. Addictions, particularly to alcohol and prescription drugs, is another manifestation. Too often, priests and religious can gravitate to this type of individualism in the guise of anonymity.

A common objection, particularly among those who are disengaged, is that anonymity is a core tenet of AA. Actually, anonymity in AA means not divulging personal information to outsiders, it does not mean being lonely and disconnected with others. AA members are not anonymous with each other. Rather, they are part of a fellowship, very much like an extended family. In fact, AA anonymity is the opposite of individualism; it fosters healthy relationships and accountability to self, others and God.

In his testimony, Father Charles describes or implies that provincials or rectors may have





unwittingly fostered his disengagement from his community. In the early years there were a number of living assignments in which he lived alone, with one priest who was seldom around, or in which there was little or no accountability for his drinking behavior and prescription drug use. These living situations seemed to enable his disengagement from others and his addiction. In contrast, in later years when he was in more supportive and accountable living situations, his recovery was supported and encouraged. This support and accountability effectively derailed his disengagement—the drinking and drugging cycle and instead fostered personal and spiritual transformation.

### CONCLUDING NOTE

Father Charles' testimony can be read and appreciated as an inspiring story of addiction and recovery, and as a powerful testimony of how organizational factors influenced the course of one priest's journey from addiction to recovery. In our current psychologically-minded culture, it is all too commonplace to overemphasize individual dynamics in personal and spiritual transformation, while dismissing or downplaying the influence of organizational dynamics. The reality is that organizational dynamics, such as policies and leadership decisions, can and do significantly influence an individual's personal and spiritual transformation. To the extent that congregations,

orders, and dioceses are sensitive to these dynamics, they are less likely to unwittingly enable addictions and more likely to foster transformation in their members.

The take home point of this commentary is that in a religious organization, be it a province or diocese, personal and spiritual transformation is always impacted—positively or negatively--by organizational dynamics.

### FURTHER READING

Marc Galanter, Helen Dermatis & Cristal Sampson (2014) **Spiritual Awakening in Alcoholics Anonymous: Empirical Findings.** *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 32:2-3, 319-334.

Loder, James E. (1989). **The Transforming Moment.** Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers and Howard.

Shults, F.LeRon and Steven J. Sandage (2006). **Transforming Spirituality: Integrating Theology and Psychology.** Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.







# THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

**T**HIS MONTH THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS (USCCB) AUTHORIZED THE PUBLICATION OF AN UPDATED RESOURCE ON THE RECEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL PASTORAL MINISTERS.

After an extensive consultation and review process, involving the three national religious conferences and many institutions for the orientation of international pastoral ministers, the Guidelines on Receiving Pastoral Ministers in the United States, 3rd Edition, was drafted and approved by four USCCB Committees: Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (CCLV); Cultural Diversity in the Church; Protection of Children and Young People; and Canonical Affairs and Church Governance. This new publication will be available from the USCCB sometime in November 2014, both in hard copy and electronic form.

The document will be published in seven sections, each of which will be updated as necessary over time. An introduction provides the theological context for the sharing of pastoral ministers, including the missionary character of the Church. Further sections explore the following: canonical considerations; civil immigration law; finance and tax law; psychological screening; youth protection; and finally, the preparation and ongoing formation of the receiving community and the international pastoral minister.

In 2015 CCLV will coordinate four regional workshops to implement this important resource for the life and ministry of the Church in the United States:

JANUARY 8: Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA

MARCH 12: University of Dallas, Irving, TX

SEPTEMBER 10: Westin-O'Hare Hotel, near Chicago, IL

OCTOBER 22: BWI Marriott Hotel, near Baltimore, MD

The workshops are designed for those who work with international priests, religious and seminarians, as well as those who bear responsibility for the writing and review of their community's policies, such as: Bishops, Major Superiors, Vicars General, Chancellors, Vicars for Clergy, Vicars for Religious, Judicial and Canonical Vicars, Vocation Directors, Religious Formation personnel, Child and Youth Protection personnel, Diocesan Attorneys, Finance Officers, Diaconate Directors, Delegates of Religious Superiors, and Seminary officials.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the workshop presenters, schedule and registration information, please see the USCCB Web site for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations at [usccb.org/cclv](http://usccb.org/cclv).



## UPDATE FROM CMSM

Since February 2014 the CMSM leadership has endorsed a plan and formulated a special advisory council of notable professionals to review the policies, procedures, and actual work of the Conference and collectively of its individual institutes regarding environments for the protection of minors. In the first two meetings the members have become familiar with programs adopted and functioning; presenters have also helped the council to identify areas concerned with human development such as assessment of candidates, indicators of a healthy and wholesome lifestyle, and transparency and accountability within the culture of male religious life in the United States. As the two-year mandate of the council continues, the members will compose an advisory report internal to the elected leadership of the Conference, identifying both areas of successful practice and growth as well as recommendations for corrections and improvements.

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) is an association of the leadership of men in religious and apostolic institutes in the United States. The Conference has formal ties with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the National Assembly of Religious Brothers and other national agencies. CMSM represents U.S. male religious and apostolic communities before a number of national and international bodies, including the Congregation of Religious and Secular Institutes of the Holy See, which officially recognizes CMSM as the national representative body for men in religious and apostolic communities in the United States.

CMSM addresses the life and concerns of religious and communities of apostolic life in the United States, including their evangelizing mission in the context of Church and culture in this country. CMSM is both a voice for major Superiors and a service to them:

- a) as a voice, it speaks regionally, nationally and internationally, independently or in concert with other groups; it does so from the perspective of male religious and members of apostolic communities on issues regarding their life, as well as that of the Church and of our society;
- b) as a service, it assists major Superiors in their role of leadership in their own communities and in the Conference as a whole, especially in promoting greater fidelity and more effective witness to the Gospel ideal.



**W**omen religious are in a unique time in their own congregations. The large groups of women who entered US religious institutes in the 1930s through the 1960s are now septuagenarians, octogenarians, even centenarians.

While the demographics in the mid-20th century projected a very young cohort of never-ending vital religious, so the aging of that cohort projects a religious life comprised of very old sisters. Neither represents the true picture, yet we are left with a public image that gives a distorted view of religious life.

Religious life by its nature is small and charismatic. Within that life form, religious institutes are given to the world for a time, and reach their fulfillment as society meets the need for which each was founded. At its essence, religious are a group gathered together through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to seek God. That quest is manifested in religious communities through a life of prayer, incarnated through works of charity and social compassion, and illumined through a particular lens of the Gospel the Spirit raises up in certain historical moments.

Every religious institute in the United States is facing – consciously and deliberately – or subconsciously and passively – its future. The role of leaders is to lead the community in this discernment – overtly and courageously – and ask the questions:

IS THIS RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE IN ITS LAST GENERATION OF MEMBERS, THUS NEEDING TO PROVIDE FOR CURRENT MEMBERS AND CELEBRATE ITS LEGACY?

IS THIS RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE VIABLE FOR THE FUTURE, EXHIBITING A CONSISTENT FLOW OF NEW MEMBERS, FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY, AND LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL?

HOW ARE YOUNGER WOMEN RELIGIOUS BEING PREPARED TO TAKE THEIR PLACE AS LEADERS? ARE THEY HEALTHY AND MATURE? ARE THEIR IDEAS TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN THE CONGREGATION AS A WHOLE? ARE THEY ACADEMICALLY, THEOLOGICALLY, SPIRITUALLY, AND EMOTIONALLY PREPARED TO MINISTER AND TO LEAD?

LCWR has a responsibility to support its members in navigating these next years – to get from here to there, to downsize in order to become what religious have been through the centuries: small, liminal groups, in the words of theologian, Monika Hellwig: “practicing church for the church,” seeking God, serving the needs of society at the margins, and raising up for the church unaddressed needs.

To fulfill this responsibility, LCWR received a \$1,125,000 grant from a family foundation to work specifically with religious institutes that are in a time of significant transition. LCWR is creating an initiative to offer pastoral attention to the leaders and members of these institutes to help them move beyond the denial, disappointment, anger, and feelings of failure to accept and embrace the good a congregation has done and to plan for and celebrate its legacy. LCWR will work in close partnership with the Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) which also received a grant to provide practical

assistance to leaders with the governance, managerial, and financial decisions facing these religious institutes. RCRI will develop models and resources for use by the institutes, and will train individuals who can assist their leaders with the appropriate use of the resources. We believe this partnership will create a successful and effective coherent program for the women leading these congregations through these challenging times of change.



Janet Mock, CSJ

Janet Mock, CSJ, A Sister of St. Joseph of Baden, Pennsylvania is the current Executive Director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR).

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) is an association of the leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States. The conference has more than 1400 members, who represent more than 80 percent of the approximately 51,600 women religious in the United States. Founded in 1956, the conference assists its members to collaboratively carry out their service of leadership to further the mission of the Gospel in today's world.





## NURTURING VOCATIONS TO RELIGIOUS LIFE & PRIESTHOOD: The Impact of a Volunteer Service Year

A recent national survey of never-married Catholics in the United States by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) reveals that there is no shortage of Catholics who very seriously consider a religious vocation. If the Catholic Church could encourage just a small fraction of those who are seriously interested, there would be little discussion of diminishing numbers of priests and religious. What is lacking is a more thorough understanding of how the Church can encourage more of these individuals into discerning and following the call they are hearing.

In 2013, CARA surveyed former volunteers (volunteer alumni) for the Catholic Volunteer Network and its member organizations. This was one of the largest studies of long-term service volunteers (full-time volunteer service for nine months or more) undertaken in the United States in recent years.

The research revealed that an unexpectedly large number of former volunteers had become priests, deacons, sisters, brothers, or seminarians. Additionally, these volunteer alumni reported giving consideration to a vocation in religious life or priesthood at a much higher proportion than their Catholic peers who had not spent a year in volunteer service.

### CONSIDERATION OF A VOCATION TO RELIGIOUS LIFE OR PRIESTHOOD

In a national Catholic poll of never-

married Catholics ages 14 and older, CARA asked if the respondent had ever considered becoming a Catholic priest, brother, or sister. Among never married male Catholics, 13 percent reported that they have considered becoming a priest or brother. The response among women was similar, as 10 percent have considered becoming a sister.

About one-fifth of those who had considered a vocation to priesthood or religious life reported having “very seriously” considered it. While this may appear small, the actual number of individuals those percentages represent are quite large, especially when compared to the current number of priests, brothers, and sisters.

For example, there are about 43,000 priests and brothers in the United States today, but there are over 350,000 never married Catholic men who have given “very serious” consideration to becoming a priest or brother. Considering that about 1,000 men enter the seminary or religious life each year, this means that only a fraction of 1 percent of those men who “very seriously” consider priesthood or religious life act on that impulse in a given year.

There are about 54,000 sisters in the United States and more than 250,000 never married Catholic women have given “very serious” consideration to becoming a sister. Considering that about 200 women enter religious

institutes each year, this is only a fraction of 1 percent of those women who have “very seriously” considered religious life.

What can the research tell us about what moves men and women from consideration to actualization? After all, if just a very small percentage of those giving serious consideration to priesthood or religious life were influenced to act on that impulse that would dramatically increase the number of men and women entering seminaries and novitiates.

### THE INFLUENCE OF COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

In a 2012 CARA survey of seminarians and recently ordained priests (both diocesan and religious), respondents were asked how much influence various individuals had on their vocational choice during college. College friends and professors who were priests, sisters or brothers had the greatest positive influence on the individual’s vocational discernment, especially if the individual was attending a Catholic college. Campus ministers were also significant influences in both Catholic and non-Catholic colleges. College roommates were rated as having the least influence on one’s vocational discernment.

The same study asked seminarians and recently ordained priests how often they discussed faith, religion, and prayer in the classroom and with various people outside of class during college. The research indicates that Catholic college environments are more conducive than non-Catholic colleges to discussions of faith, religion, and prayer. Those who attended Catholic colleges are substantially more likely to report that various groups on their campus expressed “some” or “very much” interest in faith, religion, and prayer.

It appears that a Catholic college provides an environment or culture where those considering a religious vocation have the space and opportunity to deepen and test their discernment. Such an environment or culture is less likely to be encountered in a non-Catholic college.

“...an unexpectedly large number of former volunteers had become priests, deacons, sisters, brothers, or seminarians.”

### A YEAR OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Opportunities for long-term (9 months or more) volunteer service after college have expanded greatly with the emergence of an increasing number of faith-based service organizations. A 2013 CARA survey of over 5,000 volunteer alumni from 60 different volunteer service groups (e.g., Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Maryknoll Lay Missioners, Lasallian Volunteers, and Vincentian Volunteers) examined the impact of a year of volunteer service on their life choices, church engagement, and civic activities.

These volunteer service groups often focus their recruiting on Catholic colleges and nearly three-fifths (58 percent) of volunteer alumni graduated from a Catholic college. This suggests that those entering a year of volunteer service are also more likely to have experienced an encouraging environment for their consideration of a



religious vocation at the Catholic college they attended.

When asked if they have considered a vocation to ordained ministry or religious life, 54 percent of the Catholic men and 33 percent of the Catholic women said "yes." These volunteer alumni are three or more times as likely to have considered a religious vocation than were the never married Catholics described earlier in this report.

Volunteer alumni are also more likely to have given serious consideration to a vocation. 7 percent of the Catholic volunteer alumni women have "very seriously" considered a vocation compared to 2 percent of the never married Catholic women. Among men, the difference is even greater as 19 percent of the Catholic volunteer alumni men have "very seriously" considered a vocation compared to 3 percent of the never married Catholic men. The volunteer alumni are 3 to 6 times more likely to give "very serious" consideration to a vocation to ordained ministry or religious life.

More than one in ten (11 percent) Catholic men who were volunteer alumni are now a priest, deacon, brother or seminarian. And one in fifty (2 percent) of the Catholic women who were former volunteers are now a sister. Within the larger population of Catholics, the proportion of women and men in ordained ministry or religious life is a small fraction of 1 percent. The alumni of volunteer service organizations have an extraordinarily high proportion of individuals in ordained ministry or religious life.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The data suggest that there is a process of self-selection occurring, as young women and men who may be already considering a religious vocation opt to

attend a Catholic college. During their college years, those in Catholic colleges are more likely to find the opportunity and encouragement to express and deepen their discernment.

The research on volunteer alumni suggests that volunteering for a year of service in a faith-based volunteer service organization may often be a next step in a young adult's discernment process. This is evidenced by the majority of the men volunteer alumni and one-third of the women volunteer alumni who have considered a religious vocation. Current and former volunteers may well be the most likely and identifiable group of potential vocations to priesthood and religious life.

While the vast majority of volunteers (89 percent of the men and 98 percent of the women) have not pursued priesthood or religious life, nevertheless this is a group of young adult Catholics to whom bishops and the leadership of religious institutes should pay careful attention. The support, encouragement, and engagement with current and former volunteers can have nothing but positive consequences for dioceses and religious institutes through both the nurturing of religious vocations and the future cadre of local church leaders.

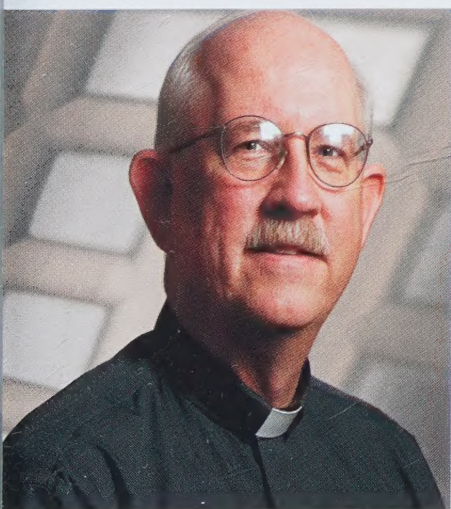
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CARA was founded by Catholic leaders in 1964 to put social science research tools at the service of the Catholic Church in the United States. For information on CARA and its mission of research, analysis, and planning, contact: CARA at Georgetown University 2300 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20007 Phone: 202-687-8080 • Fax: 202-687-8083 • [CARA@georgetown.edu](mailto:CARA@georgetown.edu) [cara.georgetown.edu](http://cara.georgetown.edu) © CARA 2014



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Father Tom Gaunt is a Jesuit of the Maryland Province and is the current Executive Director for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, Washington, DC.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## GUEST HOUSE SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Somerset Inn

Troy, MI

**July 20-22, 2015**

## GUEST HOUSE ICON DEI CHRISTMAS MARKET

San Marino Club

Troy, Michigan

**November 6, 2014**

## GUEST HOUSE ALUMNI WINTER SEMINAR

DiamondHead Resort

Fort Myers Beach, FL

**January 12-15, 2015**

## USCCB- CCLV REGIONAL WORKSHOP

On New Guidelines for

International Pastoral Ministries

Loyola Marymount University

Los Angeles, CA

**January 8, 2015**

## GUEST HOUSE ALUMNAE WINTER RETREAT

DiamondHead Resort

Fort Myers Beach, FL

**January 15-18, 2015**

## GUEST HOUSE WALKING WITH THE WOUNDED

**May 6-8, 2015**

**June 3-5, 2015**

**October 7-9, 2015**

## CMSM NATIONAL SUPERVISORS AND MONITORS TRAINING

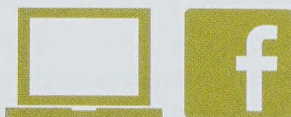
Oblate School of Theology

San Antonio, TX

**October 27, 2014**

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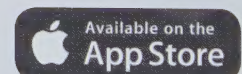
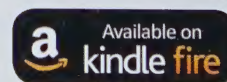


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